SOLILOQUIUM ANIMÆ;

The Sole-talk of the Soule:

OR,

A spirituall and heavenly Dialogue betwixt the Soule of Man, and God.

Which, for the great affinity it hath with other books of the Author published heretofore in our native tongue, is now entituled,

{ *The fourth Book of the Imitation of Christ.* }

Translated and corrected by
THOMAS ROGERS.

LONDON,
Printed by *Robert Young*, 1640.

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To the Christian Reader.

Being much and carnestly requested hereunto, I have published, in our vulgar tongue, another of Malleolus, *alias* T. de Kempis, *or* Kempisius *works: not that (I confesse) which of some well meening, though not so well deeming persons was commended unto me, I mean that in the old English translation, and in some Latine copies too, called* The fourth book of the Imitation of Christ,

which indeede is altogether De sacramento Altaris, *and so intituled: but the next to that in* Kempisius *workes, namely, the* Soliloquium animæ. *This I have tearmed, for the great affinitie it hath with the books of* Kempisius *by mee heretofore divulged,* The fourth book of the Imitation of Christ.

In the doing whereof, I have as little as might be varied from the Authors words and phrases, and no where from the sense; but where himselfe hath varied from the truth of God, and, I doubt not, would have redressed, had he lived in these daies of light, as he did in the time of most palpable blindnesse.

And this have I done with the greater alacrity, because I finde (and thou maist read it also in the Authors owne Preface) that hee not onely doubted that hee might utter some things both fond and offensive, but also wished to have some godly corrector of his faults, and prayed unto Almighty God graciously to reveal such things offensive, either unto himselfe, or unto some other.

Whose godly prayer God hath heard, and discovered those things for thy benefit, and testification; beside how Krmpisius, *the Author, howsoever liuing in a popish time, was yet in heart no Papist, but would like well of that which*

is done, as I trust thou wilt, whose edifying, and spirituall comforting I have onely aymed at.

And reaping this comfort to thy ſoule, by the reading or hearing of this Treatiſe, thankfull unto thy God that giveth thee ſome taſte of the celeſtiall joyes in this miſerable and all-troubleſome world: to whoſe gracious protection I doe moſt humbly commend thee and my ſelfe.

I Have gathered together into a little book for my comforts sake, certaine devout sentences, the better so to commit them to memory; I have also disposed them as into a pleasant Orchard set out with all sorts of trees, and beautified with all varieties of goodly flowers, whereinto I might now and then enter, both for to chuse & behold at my need such matter as my heart desires for the refreshing of the mind grieved at any time, and overwhelmed with pensiveneſſe.

Now the more cleerely, and readily to finde under which arbour I might repose my selfe, or which flower were best to bee culled out, I have made the heads

heads of every Chapter to glitter (as it were) with red titles, I have likewise with varietie of words, as now talking, now reasoning, now praying, now conferring, now in mine owne, now in another mans person, bewreathed about the text with a sweet and delightfull stile.

Wherefore I intreat them whosoever shall reade it, first that they bee not moved with indignation at that which the writer hath done; (for it was his minde wholly to talk with his God:) Next, that they will pardon the imperfection, and plainnesse of the stile, considering that God is more delighted with words that be simple and pure, then with those that be artificiall. And if happily the sense in any place appear either not found, or not clear

enough, my desire is to have a godly corrector of the same, telling him withall, that what soeuer matter soeuer hee shall espie, it hath escaped from mee not of purpose, but rather for that I was not heedie enough in marking what I writ. Moreouer, forasmuch as man in that iudgement of his which is most probable, may bee deceiued; vnto thee O God Almighty, and father of lights, doe I thine humble disciple make recourse, and this Sole-talke of mine doe present before thy diuine Maiestie, to the end that thou mayst both approue the things well said, and disproue what is done amisse, and insinuate also either into my self, or some other faithfull seruant of thine, more rightly to obserue whatsoeuer things are offensiue.

My request is also, holy Father,

ther, that I thy poore [illegible]
may obtaine at thy hands [illegible]
time & space to abide in [illegible]
plentifull pastures of the [illegible]
tures, which be and shall be [illegible]
chiefest comfort, until that [illegible]
of eternity appear, and the [illegible]
dow of mortality doe [illegible]
away. And therefore withdraw
thou from mee all unprofitable
cares, worldly desires, hurtful
affections, and whatelse may
hinder me from my desired de-
sire. For hee must have a free
minde and a quiet, that would
meditate of hidden & heaven-
ly matters. Wherefore that I
may bee worthy to attaine to
suit, vouchsafe thou (my God)
to endue and fill mee with the
grace of thine heavenly spirit,
that I may speake to thy glory,
and to mine owne soule.

The fourth Booke of the imitation of CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

A longing of the Soule after God.
The incomprehensible Majestie of the Lord.
An exhortation to the love of God.

SOULE.

AS for mee, it is good to draw neer unto a God. a Psa. 73. 2.

O short, and O sweet saying, embracing God, and abandoning the universall world! What more can be said? And what moreover is to bee desired? Would it not suffice if that was performed which now is spoken? And were o-

ther, yea many other things uttered, should not all in the end be reduced unto this one thing?

Therefore my soule, say thou with the Prophet, *As for mee, it is good to draw neere unto God* [b].

[b] ps.73.28.

O my God, thou art mine onely felicity; thou alone art good [c], and sweet unto me.

[c] Lu.18.19.

To speak of thee, it delighteth the lover; to think of thee, it liketh the religious, whose heart is not set upon the world [d], but hidden with thee in the heavens, to the end that both thou alone mayest be his treasure, and in most joy; and he not vexed daily in this world, where false concupiscence doth provoke unto sin [e].

[d] Mat.6.21. Col.3.1,2.

[e] Phil.4.7.

O my God, how is hee affected which is inflamed with thy love? How doth hee rejoyce that hath no pleasure in any vaine creature [f]?

[f] 1 Joh.2.16.

[g] Rom.8.35, 36, &c. 1 Cor.13.4, 5, &c.

Are not these the words of such a man in that Psalme, whereout the beginning of my speech was taken even these his words?

Whom have I in heaven but thee, and I have desired none in the earth with thee.

[h] Ps.73.25.

MAN. O holy soule! O ten-

soule so longing after God ! What is that I heare ? what is that thou saist? Are the things both in heaven and in earth but small things in thine eyes ?

SOULE. Surely I take all things but for trifles.

MAN. What then seekest thou ? Whom would you have without these ? and where will you find him if not in these things ?

Hath he either name or place, or habitation to be sought by?

Where is the place where his honour dwelleth ? of which in a certain Psalme thou sangest, saying,

f Psal. 83.

O Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

Make answer, I pray thee. For, if thou canst shew me him, I will goe with thee; and wee will seek him together, yea, and he shal be thy God, and my God : and wee shall be full happy when wee have found him, and hold him.

SOULE. Why aske you this at mine hand ? or why so curiously doe you enquire of this matter of mee ? Think you I can or am able to utter such things ? what though gladly I

would, conceive not yet, that whi
through the rarenesse of the thing
and the deepnesse of the mystery, I
am restrained back?

What aske you mee? Aske them
who have both heard and seen, they
are such as better can describe him
whom you seeke.

But rather aske him that knoweth
k Psalm.94. 8,9,10. all k things. For he it is of whom we
speake, that both best can tell you
who himself is, yea, and best declare
the place of his owne abode. Even
he it is (and none other) which tea-
1 Psa.119.12, Psal.94.12. cheth man l knowledge, and giveth
his grace also to the m humble.
m Jam.4.6. Make recourse unto him which
revealeth himself when he will, and
to whom hee will, neither is there
any beside him that can open. He
alone can reueale to thee what the
n Mat.11.25 1 Cor.2.9. joy is of such as love n him, and that
farre more excellently then I can
tell you.

MAN. But why speak you on this
wise, O holy and humble Soule?
Think not that I would know that
of you, which neither ought to be
knowne, nor can be uttered. Keepe
your secret to your selfe: let your
doore still abide shut upon you:

the seale of faith remain uncancelled, neither let the vaile, for me, be removed from the sanctuary.

Eat you holy bread (by your selfe) in the chappell, goe into the tabernacle of your house, ascend into the upper parlour, enter into the cellar of the eternall King, or which is more noble, and soundeth more sweetly, even into the Bride chamber of your celestiall spouse.

I know it is p written, *It is not good to take the childrens bread, & to cast it to whelps.* I know this, I say, and have read it: but marke againe what followeth, & take pitie upon me, according to the word of her that q said, *The whelps doe eate of the crummes which fall from their masters table.*

p Mat.15.26

q Mat.15.27

And therefore hide not that from mee which I demand, but of the greatnes of your inward pleasures, poure out even a sparkle of the fiery love. Give mee one small drop of precious wine, send forth some little savour of the best oyntment, whose chiefest part and lovely comfort is well and usually knowne to thee, that I also may taste thereof.

Why linger you? Satisfie my desire, and open the doore to a friend

now at this third knocke.

O beloved, speak of the welbeloved, let not me be neglected.

If you cannot describe him rightly as he is, yet speak of him so wel as you can. For indeed as he is, who is able to describe him? Yea, who is able to conceive the describer?

Therefore, if not as in himselfe he is: yet tell me what thou thinkest of him. If not what to himself: yet utter out how good hee hath been to thee.

For, who ever shall search forth what he is in himselfe?

Thou wilt never doe it, because thou hast plainly confessed, and not denyed, how speaking of [r] him,

[r] Psal. 139. 6, 7. *Thy knowledge is too wonderfull for me, it is so high that I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit?*

If then thou art not able to know thine own spirit, which the Creator and [s] quickner of all spirits hath [t] made, how at any time wilt thou know him which is uncreated? Did not this make thee all amazed to [u] say, *O Lord, who is like unto thee?*

[s] Act. 17. 25.
[t] Gen. 2. 7.
[u] Psal. 35. 10.

Notwithstanding, of all friendship, by some similitude describe him, whose essence thou hast not yet attained

tained unto: Neither is it for you to deny to show him in part, whom you thinke cannot wholly be revealed.

S. I must needs say you are too curious, and importune upon mee. Thou searchest all my privities, and lettest in thine hand into the secrets of my chamber.

I sent thee unto him, and commest thou again unto me? Seek you me, or him?

But I pray you, of what spirit art thou? Bee still I beseech thee, and trouble mee not. For whom thou seekest, he is above me.

M. But can he that seeketh after God, so easily give over? Protract not to speake, for you may comfort me forth-with. How long will you keep me in suspence? what, doe you say and unsay?

As I live, I will not give over, except you blesse mee. For I count it a blessing, if thou show mee thy God.

Now therefore, if thou hast seen him, tell me plainly, and I will take him upon my shoulders.

S. I know thou hast a great desire and a love unto the Creator.

But a great thing is it which you require at mine hands, and such a thing as I am in doubt whether it may be done or no.

He whom thou seekest, knoweth it right well: for it is not in me to let thee know so much.

Your demand seemeth unto me to be like that of the Spouse, which
x Can.8.1,6. in the songs did say, *x Shew me, O thou, whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest.*

Wilt thou then learne of me who this is, or what good hee hath done with me? Doubtlesse it is not in me to shew you.

But you are not content, neither his greatnesse, who exceedeth the
y 1 Kin.8.27 *y* heavens, can deterre you, nor my weaknesse, which in his eyes am nothing, make you to desist.

Why hast thou laid this burden upon me? I am not able to tell thee, untill I goe into the sanctuary of
z Ps.73.17. God, and understand the same.

Why are you so desirous to know that which may not be uttered?

M. And will you not? Oh, how faine would I bee instructed! For those things wee are most earnest to know, which the most

hardly may bee revealed.

Notwithſtanding, once againe I pray you bee not ſo hard, as altogether to be ſilent.

Think not that forthwith I will utter what you ſhall ſay, unto our enemy: I will keep your ſaying as a friend, yea as a very friend ought to doe.

You may boldly tell mee your minde ſecretly. Lo we two be here alone: neither I with lightneſſe, nor you with arrogancie are delighted, but in him which hath given us underſtanding, even of him will wee ſpeake.

And if happely he come while we are talking, let us give place, and let him be between us. If he vouchſafe to ſpeak, let us heare him gladly, and be ſilent till hee have done. At which time you ſhall not bee bound to ſatisfie my demands; for when he ſpeaketh all fleſh muſt bee ſtill.

S. This covenant I like well. Only, let him be with us, and bee wee carried unto our ſecret places. Let him be the guide of our ſpeech, and conduct us whither our delight is to goe.

This beloved of whom you do so diligently enquire, is for his greatnesse [a] unspeakable, for his height and glory [b] incomprehensible, for his strength and magnificence [c] infinite. Whatsoever is either spoken or written of him commeth farre behinde his Majestie, because in glory hee excelleth all things.

a Psal. 139.6.
b Job 9.10, 11.
c Ps. 8.1,2.

The heavens have said, He hath overpassed, ascended, and prevailed over [d] us.

d 2 Chro. 6. 18.

The earth hath answered, If the heavens, and the heaven of heavens doe not comprehend him, aske not me of [e] him.

e Ps 139.7, 8, &c.

The starres have sung, Wee are darknesse and not light, unlesse hee enlighten [f] us.

f Gen. 1. 12, &c. Ps. 139.12.

The sea trembled, and said, Hee is not in mee, and the deep knoweth him not.

Hear you what they say?

M. I heard, and was sore troubled; at their voice my very lips trembled.

S. What then will become of thee if we should aske him? Let us speak unto him.

O Lord, art thou hee of whom the

the Prophets have prophesied, and whose commandement all things in their seasons do obey.

G. Verily, I am that I am, and besides mee there is none other God: I am the beginning and the ending: I am the creator, and the governour of all things. I live, saith the Lord, and I will reigne for ever and ever.

g Exod. 3. 14.
h Deut. 4. 35. Psal. 18. 31. Esa. 45. 21.
i Rev. 18.
k Esa. 42. 5. Act. 17. 24.
l Heb. 1. 3. Ioh. 5. 19.

Now little worme, what sayest thou, being invironed with such light?

S. Loe, thy beloved, whom thou thoughtest was with mee, speaketh unto thee.

Hee was with mee when I m said, *For mee it is good to draw neere unto GOD.*

m Psal. 73. 28.

He will be with thee; if thou also wilt n say, *My soule refuseth comfort; the day of misery I desire o not, for thou art my King and my p God.*

n Psal. 77. 2.
o Ier. 17. 16.
p Psal. 5. 2.

Be not like to raging lovers, but love God alone, seeke him alone, which admitteth no companion of the world into his fellowship.

Talke thou onely with him, and though he depart, leaving the room void, beare all things patiently. For his wont is to goe and come, to

proves

prove his friend, and make him perfect in loving.

If thou desire his presence, beare his absence patiently. Waite, and wait againe, hee will depart for a while, and after a while will againe returne.

Love maketh thee thus affected, which now heaveth thee on high, and straight way flingeth to the ground againe.

His love is then all flowers sweeter, then lilies fairer, and brighter then the precious stones.

For no creature is to be preferred
q Mat.10.37 before the love of q God, and therefore for that every thing is to bee
r Mat.16.26. Luk.9.25. despised.

So soon as I was touched inwardly with his love, I forthwith began so to be inflamed in my minde, that bidding adieu to all things in the world, I onely wished for his most pure embracements, and, as it were bearing hot coles out of a burning oven, I uttered these words which
s Ps.73.25, 26. but few do use.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and I have desired none in the earth with thee. God is the strength of mine heart and my portion for ever.

By

of the Imitation of Christ.

By these gather now of thy beloved, what manner a one, and what he is, which incomprehensibly exceedeth all the things which are and have being.

And although he can neither by words be uttered, nor conceived in mind, because he is infinite: yet is he very lovely, tractable, fellowly, and to bee intreated, insomuch as though hee cannot bee comprehended, yet after a strange manner hee may be loved. Job 23. 8.

For by love hee is taken, yea by love all bounden: but by desire he is sought, by prayer knocked at, and by hope attained.

If as yet I have not satisfied you, let him, whom you have sought, satisfie you, and teach you, above all teachers, to find himselfe.

CHAP.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 2.

1. *Of God his distinct judgement at the end of this world.*
2. *The cursed state of the ungodly.*

KNit mine heart unto thee, O Lord, that I may feare thy holy [a] Name:

a Ps.86.11. O my God, thou art much to bee loved, yea, and to be feared much thou [b] art.

b Ps.56.4. He that loveth, let him be glad: but he that loveth not thee, let him quake and fear. But he which neither doth feare thee nor love thee, is utterly foolish and frantick. For *It is a fearfull thing to fall into thy* [c] *hands.*

c Heb.10.31 And, *who knoweth the power of thy* [d] *wrath?* Or, *who may abide the day of thy comming unto* [e] *judgement?*

d Ps.90.11.
e Mal.3.2.

For, thy roaring shall bee like a [f] Lion: and thy glittering sword like a consuming fire.

f Esa.5.29.

At the sound of thy voice all the dwellers in the world shall bee moved, and when thou commest, all the foundations of the earth shall [g] shake.

g 2 Pet.3.7. Rev.6.14.

Who

Who then but will feare ? or by what meanes can any escape thine hands.

If a man will hide himselfe upon the strong i rock, thou wilt thunder thereupon, and it shall rend asunder.

And if he lurk in caves or mountaines, he shall be plucked k out and be made to sustain thy l displeasure, because hee cared not for thy favour.

Surely there is no place which can hide man from thy m presence.

For all things are naked and open in thine n eyes: thou seest the heart and the o reines, and beholdest the most secret affections of the thought, so that no secret is hid from thine p eyes.

O how terrible wilt thou bee to sinners, and to the hearts that bee hardened q, which now doe glory in ill-doing, and triumph in wickednesse, saying, *The Lord seeth r not, hee will not f regard.*

They are so puffed up with vaine words, as though thou wouldest never come: yea, they turne away their eyes, that they may not see the end.

h Ps.139.7, 8, &c.

i Isa. 2.19, 20, &c.

k Hos. 10.8. Luk. 23.30.

l Rev. 6.16, 17. Rev. 9.6.

m Iob. 23.10

Psal. 139.7, 8, &c.

n Heb. 4.13.

o Psal. 7.9.

p Eccles. 23, 19, 20.

q Pro. 1.24, 25. &c.

r Ps. 10.11.

f Ps. 94.7.

But

The fourth booke

But in the houre that they think not thou wilt [t] come, and they shall be taken in the snares [u] of their own wickednesse. And as theeves & robbers being suddenly taken are confounded: so shall they be put to confusion at their due time.

t Mat.24.44.
u Luk.22.35.

Then wilt thou have them in derision which now deride thy [x] servants, and evill shall be rendred unto such as have abhorred thy righteousnesse.

x Pro.1.26, 27,28,&c.

Now they stop their eares unto thy voice, but the time shall come when they shall cry and not be heard.

Now they turne thy word into a fable, but themselves shall bee turned then into a flame of [y] fire. For thy word shall goe out with a horrible blast, and it shall strike the wicked and unbeleevers without all mercy.

y Mat.25.41

What will the proud person say then so puffed up with knowledge, and swelling in power? What answer will hee make, when the last trump shall sound in his [z] eares? When thou Lord our God shalt appeare [a] in Majestie, together with thine Angels [b] and Archangels.

z 1 Cor.15. 52.
a Mat.24.31
b 1 Thes. 4. 16.

Then

Then all the ungodly deriders of thy word shall be husht: and they which have molested thy servants, stricken with an horrible [c] feare.

[c] Wisd. 5.2, 3. &c.

Then shall they utterly bee confounded, which laying a good conscience and honesty aside, gave themselves to vanity and wantonnesse.

They shall suffer punishment then, which have looſed the bridle unto the flesh.

Then shall they roare towards heaven, which now are cunning in vaine musick and daunces.

Then shall that bee turned into mourning, which hath been contracted by inordinate pleasure.

They shalbe bound up in bundles together to be burned [d] then, which have been companions together at drunkennesse and belly-cheer. And whom love have bound in wickednesse, the revenging fire shall roule together in torments.

[d] Matth. 13. 41. 42, 43.

O ye fooliſh and wretched, O ye frantick and blind lovers of the world, what doe yee? what is your meaning? how will yee escape the vengeance of the Lord?

Why for a little pleasure which you

you do love, do ye haſten unto ever-
laſting torments? Why fear ye not
hell, which doe ſo feare a little pe-
nance? And, you which flie the
death of the fleſh, why aforehand do
yee not take heed of the eternall
death of the ſoule?

Unleſſe therefore yee do convert
and repent, yee ſhall never eſcape
theſe horrible and fiery torments of
Gods diſpleaſure.

When I conſider the day and hour
of the generall judgement, my
bones do ſhake for fear, becauſe in
treatie then ſhall not turn away the
wrath of God, but he will be a right-
e Act. 10. 42. teous Judge to * all.
2 Tim. 4. 8.
Heb. 12. 23. O God moſt holy, mighty, and
mercifull Saviour, ſave mee from
that bitter death, and give me grace
to repent, that I may unfainedly be-
waile my ſinnes before I depart out
of this preſent world.

CHAP.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 3.

1. An humble confession of sinnes.
2. with a prayer for grace to repent.

MY sorrow is ever before [a] mee. a Ps.38.17.

O my GOD, fondly have I spotted my life with manifold sins: but O Lord behold my teares which I shed before thee, because I have so much offended thine holinesse.

For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good [b] thing, and that so long as I carry about a mortall body, I am not free from wickednesse. b Rom.7.18.

I therefore doe sinne, and offend day by day, and, which is more lamentable, I suffer many sins to passe away without sorrow and due repentance.

For being busie most commonly, and encumbred with affaires of the world, and vaine curiousnesse, I am notable so speedily to returne unto wholesome teares. Whereof it is that the darknesse of sinne doth increase

creaſe ſo mightily againſt mee, the which both ſtop up the fountaine of grace, and hinder the ſtreames of heavenly comfort from comming unto me.

LORD. And is that a ſmall offence?

SOVLE. No my God, it is a great ſinne, and ſo much the greater, as it paſſeth the ſooner from the heart, and doth not prick mee with ſorrow.

But, Lord, wilt thou not regard this my wicked dealing? How long ſhall I delude thee, and thus deceive my ſelfe?

Wilt thou alway be ſilent? where is thy rod? where is thy ſpur? where is thy wand?

O Lord, why doſt thou withdraw thy judgement, and the pains of hel from mine eyes?

Were theſe things alwaies in my remembrance, could I bee ſo reckleſſe?

Thy ſilence and patience is for mine [d] amendment: but if I ſtill be negligent, wilt thou not then puniſh me [e] ſeverely? Surely thou wilt puniſh me, if not in this world, yet in the world to come.

d Wiſd. 11. 20. 1 Pet. 3. 9.
e Wiſd. 12. 10.

For

For nothing shall passe away unrevenged, neither small, neither great offence.

But much better here in this world, where both weeping is profitable, the pain is short, the satisfaction more accepted, and reconcilement sooner had.

And therefore spare not the rod, but with a sharpe water annoynt mine eyes, and reserve not my sins untill the time to come, lest then I bee delivered unto the tormentors untill I have payd the utmost f farthing. f Mat.5.26.

Better it is now a little for my profit to be pricked, then hereafter to feele the bitter paines of hel fire. Purgatory.

Wherefore I am to mourne, and to conceive a great sorrow for my sinnes.

For many things I have to bewail, but no cause at all to laugh.

The darkenesse of mine heart, the slipperinesse of my conscience, my proneness unto wickednesse, my want of grace, do wish mee, yea rather of necessity doe enforce me to weep and to lament.

Furthermore, the remembrance of

faults to find, should make me have little lust to be merry.

Spare me, O Lord, spare me.

For though I weepe, being touched inwardly with sorrow, it is no marvell, because the time is now to weep.

O happy is the houre, when I conceive sorrow for my sinnes! Blessed are the teares which doe flow from the griefe of heart, at the consideration of the foulenesse of a guilty conscience.

And who is able to sound the bottome of this depth, and to reprove the hidden filthinesse without feeling?

g Joh. 1. 9. O my God, the true light, thou canst lighten all the obscure places of mine heart, yea and burne up all the spots thereof, in the spirit of heat and judgement.

h Ps. 51. 10. It is in thee to give a new heart, to create a new spirit, and there to prepare a secret habitation, that it may be a place for thee to rest in, and a tabernacle of thy Name, which art the lover of cleannesse, and the guest of a good conscience.

But forsomuch as willingly thou doest not visite a disordered house,

but commonly leaveſt the ſame to be illuded with beaſtly affections, I am the more carefull leſt that betide me.

But help mee, O mercifull and gracious God, to repaire the ruines of this mine houſe.

Woe to him from whom thou departeſt away offended. But peace to him unto whom thou deſcendeſt, and with whom thou abideſt.

I miſerable wretch now placed in the midſt of ſnares, and loaden with the ſhackles of wickedneſſe, what councel is beſt for me, or what remedie to be uſed, but only to lift up my heavie eyes unto thee, that my cry may bee heard in the heavens?

For a polluted conſcience ſhal never find or have a better medicine, then bitterly to ſlay it ſelfe in prayer. And how can extreme tentation more profitably bee cured, that it preſſe not, then by powring continuall petitions unto thee, and by humbling our ſelves?

But who can give mee theſe bleſſings? I mean to pray and to weep as I ought to doe. Where may I attain

attaine that humilitie, and abundance of teares? Doubtlesse of the
i Ps.130.7. Lord, with whom is [i] mercy, and great redemption.

O Lord my God, the giver of all
k Jam. 1.17. [k] grace, grant that I may, as I am bound, bewaile mine offences, secret they never so small, and to confess all without vaine excuses, as well those offences which are secret, as those that are well knowne.

Let this mine hearty repentance get me thy favour againe, and prepare unto well doing, and to that which tendeth unto salvation.

CHAP. 4.

A lamentation of the soul for her weaknesse and unstayednesse in the race of vertue

Thine eyes did see mee when I was without forme [a].

a Ps.139.16.

O Lord my God, what in the end will become of mee, seeing daily I doe offend?

When shall I amend my life as I ought to doe? When will it be better with mee? when shall I waxe strong? and when shall I overcome?

I am cast headlong into the deep pit of filthinesse. Who can thinke there is yet hope left to rise againe, to amend, to goe forward, and to come unto the end? Surely, touching my selfe, I am out of all hope: Oh that mine hope were stronger in thee!

I greatly do despaire, because my weakenesse encreaseth through long troubles: and I see no end of my sorrow, and sinne.

And though I ſay, Loe now I will begin to amend: loe it is now time, I will doe my beſt to reforme my ſelf ſtraight way, alas, ſin ſtandeth before mee, the enemy lifteth up himſelfe againſt mee, and wicked cuſtome keepeth mee back with might and maine, contrary to my minde.

O Lord, behold how I am caſt downe and trodden under foot: behold the troubles which I doe endure.

Lift up thy right hand and deliver mee from my perſecutors, for they
b Pſ.142.6. are too ſtrong for [b] me.

My wiſedome is periſhed, and my ſtrength hath failed me.

Mine arme is broken, neither can
c Pſ. 44.6. my ſword ſave [c] me.

I ſee not unto whom I may flye; and that will receive and heale me, I know none.

Thou alone continueſt my refuge but I dare not approach for ſhame, becauſe I have offended thee.

I have ſinned O God, forgive me. I am ſorry, yea, heartily ſorry that even I did tranſgreſſe thy lawes.

Give mee that which ſeemeth right in thine eyes, and bee mercifull.

Thou

Thou diddest justly in forsaking me, and justly thou diddest commit mee into the hands of mine adversary.

But Lord, remember that which thou hast made, amend that which is decayed, for of it selfe it can never stand.

Mark my groaning, and my troubles: let the pain and grief of mine heart at no time bee out of thy remembrance.

O mercifull Father, cast an eye upon my thraldome and imprisonment, upon the misery and cruelty which I doe endure, and bring mee out that am bound, from the prison house, and wretched bondage.

Though a man should live many yeeres, what will hee be the better thereby? And who knoweth whether he shall amend his wicked life, or be worse and worse?

Man woteth not how hee shall proceed, and end: and his continuance is very doubtfull, because of the manifold chaunces of evils, and dangerous tentations.

Many at their first conversion from sinne, are good and humble, which afterward become froward

and rebellious. At the first they were modest and devout, zealous and silent, and in the end proved careless and dissolute, bablers and barbarous. And they which at the beginning did bridle their wicked affections, at the length had scarce any care at all, either what they said or did. And so by little and little, wickednes taketh root, and increaseth, while it is not prevented at the beginning.

Who therefore but should feare, and be circumspect, seeing such unluckie chances doe come unto the good and modest?

Againe, who throughly doth know whether hee bee elected, or hath strength to bear all things?

d Act. 14. 22. We are to be tryed d, and who is sure that he shall not be burned, seeing tentation is a fire e?

e 1 Pet. 1. 7. So that all must feare, and hope alike of the better: but none is rashly to presume, nor yet proudly to be secure.

f Pro. 17. 3. Indeed the gold which is tryed f, shalbe preserved: but I advise thee, O man, to consider well of what metall thou art.

The celestiall purger will purge her

he will fine the ſons of Levi g, even all that are his ſervants h. g Mal. 3. 3. h 2. Tim. 3. 12

It is not alwaies gold, which hath the colour of gold: neither is it alway ſtubble or naughty ſilver which endureth beating, and beareth the ſhaile. For God beholdeth the very cogitations & the hearts i, by them moſt commonly working wonders, which in the opinion of many, are but caſt-awaies. i Pſal. 7. 9

O lord God, what joy can I have in this world, when I think upon the uncertainty k and frailty of all things under heaven? k 2 Pet. 3. 7. Pſ. 102. 25. 26

Notwithſtanding, this am I ſure of, that thou art good, and that thy mercy is from generation to generation on them that feare thee l. l Luk. 1. 50.

For thine infinite goodneſſe and mercy is greater then all my ſins.

And this ſhall bee my comfort, while thou giveſt mee ſpace to amend my life.

CHAP. 5.

1. *Of the shortnesse and misery of this present life.*
2. *A prayer for grace to renounce the world, and the vanities of the same.*

LEt mee understand the shortnesse of my daies. So long as I am in this world, I am wicked [a]; and while I continue upon the earth, I am poore, a stranger, and a [b] pilgrime.

a Iob 14. 4.

b Heb. 11. 13

c 1 Tim. 6. 7.

I brought nothing into the world, and certain it is, I can carry nothing thereout: for naked came I out of my mothers [d] womb, and naked shal I returne thither againe.

d Iob 1. 21.

As a shadow which passeth away, and as a feather which is tossed up and downe with the winde, and as a guest of one night, so suddenly shall I passe away.

All the time wee have here to live is but as the shortest night. Few and evill are my [e] dayes, and after a little while they shall end, and bee as though they had never beene.

e Gen. 47. 9.

And

And when man is dead, what is in man but filthineſſe? Who will have any care of a ſtinking carcaſſe? Or who wil enquire of the abſent being dead, whereas being alive, he was accounted of?

A ſmall while is man remembred either of his friends or of ſtrangers: but undoubtedly the righteous ſhal bee had in everlaſting [f] remembrance, because hee ſhall be everlaſtingly linked to God, who is alwaies the ſame, and ſhall never die.

f Pſ.112.6.

g Pſ.102.27.

Therefore happy is he which putteth no truſt in man; nor yet rejoyceth in any worldly thing, but hath his heart fixed in [h] heaven: for whatſoever is in this world, is tranſitory [i] and vaine.

h Pſal.2.12.
i 2 Pet. 3.7. Pſ.102.25,26. 1 Cor.7.31. Ioh.2.17.

Call into thy minde thoſe which have lived ſince the world began, untill now, and tell, I pray thee, where they be. And thoſe whom you ſee and heare to live now, how long thinkeſt thou will they endure?

Say therefore of all, Every man that liveth, is but [k] vanity.

k Pſ.39.5.

O miſerable and wretched life! O frail and lamentable life! which

good men do ſuffer rather then deſire; and wicked men, albeit they deſire it, yet can they not long enjoy the ſame!

Oh, vanity of this world, when wilt thou have an end? when wilt thou ceaſe?

Yet the time will come, when all the elect ſhall bee ſet free from the bondage of corruption [l], though now they doe lament, becauſe they are eſtranged from the kingdome of Chriſt [m].

l Rom. 8. 22, 23.

m Pſa. 1. 23.

Would to God the whole world would even wither up in mine heart; and my Lord God, even mine immortall ſpouſe, ſeem ſweet unto my ſoule!

Undoubtedly, the fleeting joy of this preſent life, is but a falſe and a moſt bitter potion. Let them drink thereof that liſt, for afterward they ſhall feele a moſt bitter flixe. And the more one hath drunk thereof, the ſharper ſhall his torments bee, becauſe the whole pleaſure of this world ſhall more ſpeedily paſſe away then the winde [n], and leave to their lovers paines and burnings [o].

n Wiſd. 5. 8, 9, &c.

o Lu. 16. 25.

Therefore, out of my ſight thou deceit-

deceitfull glory of the world, and all fooliſh pleaſure of the fleſh.

Many you doe draw and deceive: but in the end you leave and deſtroy them.

Woe to them which beleeve thee: woe bee to them that are there drowned.

But come, and come nigh mee, moſt holy humility: and the full renouncing of all worldly pomps: and never do thou leave me, O thou ſweete remembrance of my preſent pilgrimage.

What am I but aſhes and earth? and whither tend I, but towards earth?

Oh, how wretched am I become! how juſtly may I lament, when I think upon my pilgrimage? and how little am I privie how I ſhall end the ſame?

If I live well, and continue ſo, there is no cauſe why I ſhould fear an evill death. But who can glory of a good life, and of a pure conſcience? He which knoweth himſelfe to be ſuch a one, let him rejoyce in the Lord, and take compaſſion upon me a ſinner.

To live, I have no deſire, becauſe

p 1 Ioh.2. 15,16,17.

q Eccles.10. 9.

r Gen.3.19.

s Heb.11.13.

t 1 Cor.1.31.

u Phil.1.23.

miſery environeth me on every ſide: to die, an evill conſcience is afraid for to anſwer God, it hath not one
x Iob 9.3. for a [x] thouſand.

The Prophet was not ſo in feare,
y Pſal. 108.1. which [y] ſaid, *Mine heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared.*

O Lord, the God of my ſalvation, let my life come unto a good end: and prolong not the daies of my lamentation. With ſorrow I came into this priſon, and without griefe I ſhall not get out.

S. Long doe I think this life, and the rather becauſe of the continuall miſery and troubles which I finde therein: but in truth it is not long, for it paſſeth away more ſwiftly
z Iob 9.25. then a [z] Poſte.

To a man that liveth in pain and
a Eccluſ. 41. miſerie, all time is [a] long, and he
2. counteth a day for a yeere. This maketh my life tedious unto mee, and ſo much the more it doth trouble mee, as the more truely I conſider all the miſeries of the ſame.

But, if happely any conſolations and joy come betweene, it ſtandeth mee upon to looke about whether they bee of God, or no. If they bee of

of God, I accept them gladly, but yet I know not how long they will continue: yet how ſhort ſoever they be, they like and pleaſe mee well.

But, would to God hee would poure them largely upon me: and cauſe them to continue with mee a long while.

But the joyes and pleaſures which are not of God, are vile and fading, albeit to the ſhew they appeare ſweet and pleaſant.

Thus, even thus paſſeth away this life, repleniſhed continually both with good and evill things.

Therefore, ſo long as I live in this world, I am a poore [b] pilgrime.

I cannot truly ſay I have enough, becauſe preſently there is ſatiety of no good [c] thing: but the good thing which I looke for, thou [d] art, in whom I beleeve.

So that when thy glory hath appeared, and repleniſhed mee, then, even then I will acknowledge that I have enough. But in the meane while, becauſe this word is hidden from mee, much griefe and ſorrow doth environ my ſoule.

And therefore being mindefull of

b Heb. 11. 13

c Eccleſ. 1. 8.

d Pſa. 119. 57

of thine holy saying, I repeate this
e Mat. 26. 38 oftentimes e, *My soule is very heavie, even unto the death.*

Well were it with mee, if this houre were come, and that neither griefe nor sorrow did possesse me.

But, Lord, I beseech thee, let thy goodnesse conserve me.

CHAP.

CHAP. 6.

An ardent desire of the soule to be loosed from sinne, and from the troubles of this world.

BRing my soule out of prison[a]. The greatnesse of my sorrow will not suffer me to be still. a Psal. 142. 7.

For why doe I yet live in this world? I know not what I can doe here.

Slowly, God hee knoweth, I goe forward in vertue: nay, would to God I went not backward.

O Lord, what a pleasure shouldest thou doe mee, if speedily thou wouldest take mee out of this life, that a worser thing come not unto me[b]. b Joh. 5. 14.

My life, alas, sigheth in pain, and in wel-doing amendeth not.

If thou looke for my conversion, I repent not by the same, but doe abuse thy long-suffering: if thou punish mee, I doe hardly shew patience, because thou pursuest dry stubble.

Why

Why then doſt thou not quite take away thy ſervant? Why do I live upon the earth? that is, why do I dwell among good people, and yet reforme not my life and manners? Why, ſo unworthily and dangerouſly keepe I the place of ſome better perſon, and yet walke ſo careleſly and ſo coldly in this life?

Thus poure I out this woefull thing which I conſider of, in the eares of my God.

Yet, gracious Lord, cry not out in thine anger againſt mee, *Cut downe* d Luk. 13.7. *the* d *tree, and caſt it into the fire.*

I accuſe mine infirmitie before thee, that I may finde grace in thy ſight through my confeſſion.

It is my part to accuſe: but it be- e Dan. 9.9. longeth unto thee to ſhew e mercy. It is my part to weepe and to ſigh bitterly: but it belongeth unto thee, Lord, mercifully to comfort.

Wherefore, my Lord and God, either give mee more grace in this life, or take mee ſpeedily out of this world, that the rent bee not worſer.

For, to live long, and not to ceaſe from ill-living, is but to aug-

ment

ment the punishment of hell.

Neither can I away with such a life as knoweth neither how to proceed in vertue, nor to bewaile wickednesse.

For that party which leadeth an holy and righteous life, is grieved at the heart whensoever hee offendeth, and that he may in grace and vertue increase more and more, it is alwayes his desire.

What shall hee doe which knoweth himselfe daily to offend; and that his flesh grievously doth rise against the spirit? who also being overcome with tediousnesse sometime, and cooled with negligence and idlenesse, doth give over to resist, or else laying aside the spiritual weapons, doth follow the swinge of the flesh, whither his owne will doth draw him. f Eph. 6. 11.

Alas, Lord and God, such a one, alas, draweth nigh unto the gates of death, and living in the flesh, runneth into the death of the soule.

Oh, how is every one to take heed that he be not seduced and supplanted of the enemy!

No man is sure from g temptati- g Mat. 6. 1.

on,

i Job 14.4. Psal. 51.5,7. k Iam.3.2. l Iob.13.3. m Eccl. 23. 19. Est 13.12.

on, no man is pure from sinne i: but all the sort of us are fraile k. But Lord, thou which art almighty l, and knowest all things m, raise up the broken in heart, and cleanse the unclean from all filthinesse, renue a new spirit within his bowels, that all faintnes and lazinesse may leave him, that spirituall zeal may returne, and that thy love may continue unmoveable within him unto the end.

n Wisd.9.15.

For he onely wanteth thine assistance, who is poised down with his own weight n: neither is he able to cast off the load of sinne, untill thou send strength from heaven of power to loose the hard fetters of carnall affections.

o Rom.6.22.

And this, my request is to obtaine: for without thy speciall grace, we shall neither lead a godly life in this world, nor live eternally in the life to come o.

p Phi.1.23.

And whereas I now live in the body, it is no joy to me: for better it were for me to die, then to live, because through this life I am debarred the farther from eternal life which cannot come, unlesse that death doe destroy the life present,

yea and death also it selfe bee destroyed.

Hence it is, that my desire is to heaven-ward, and mine heart seeking eternall rest, fetcheth deepe sighes, and cryeth:

It is now enough, Lord, take away my soule, which thou hast redeemed with thy precious bloud q.

Open to me the gate of thy kingdome, and let in a poor pilgrime r, returning unto thee from exile.

Listen to me, Lord, and loose mee from the band of the body s.

What should I longer do here? I am good neither to my selfe, nor to others.

Why then doe I live? To my self I am burdensome, to others troublesome.

What shall become of me? I wot not, Lord, whether thou hast foreseene any better thing of mee, wherefore my longing should bee lingred.

I doe allow thine ordinance, because it is good: but in mee onely I finde the evill, why it grieveth and troubleth me to live in the world.

For daily I doe sinne; I heape sinne

q 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

r Heb. 11. 13.

s Phil. 1. 23.

ſin upon ſin, and yet as I ought, I repent not.

If therefore I were looſed from
t Rom.6.6. this body of t ſin, and coupled to thee in heaven, neither ſhould I offend any more, nor thou bee offended, but be praiſed continually.

Notwithſtanding as yet thou be-
u 2 Pet.3.9. reſt with u me, and ſheweſt all patience.

I know my fault; becauſe through my ſinnes I may not enter into thy kingdome. For none unclean thing
x Eph.5.5. Rev.22.15. ſhall enter x thereinto.

But when ſhall I be without ſin? When ſhall I throughly bee cleanſed, that I may not feare to bee prohibited, but rejoyce rather to bee let in?

If I goe not forward more zealouſly, nor be more carefull than hitherto I have been, I am affraid mine hope will be little enough.

But Lord, thou which wilt that
y 1 Tim.2.4. 2 Pet.3.9. no man ſhould y periſh, but that all ſhould bee ſaved, grant mee more grace to the amendment of my life; and to hope for celeſtiall bleſſings, give mee the ſpirit of inward fatneſſe.

Let not mine heart here rejoyce
after

after the fleſh, but in fearing let it
expect for death.

Let no care or creature hold me
back: but let thy deſired preſence
draw and comfort me.

Bleſſed is the man which truſteth
in thee, O [z] Lord: but more bleſſed
is he that is paſſed out of this wick-
ed world, for hee ſhall no more ei-
ther feel or fear any [a] trouble.

z Pſ.37.14. and 27.14.

a Rev.7.17. and 21.4.

CHAP.

The fourth booke.

CHAP. 7.

A godly desire for a good death.

a Psal. 71.5. O *Lord thou art mine hope even from my youth* [a].

In this hope I fly unto thee, untill the last houre and time of my dissolution shall come.

Oh that I were so well prepared, that I might even now die under the hope of grace!

Oh that I had ended this life with an happy departure, and laide of the loade of this body [b]? how many dangers and feares had I then escaped?

b Wis. 9.15.

Happy is the man whom thou hast chosen and taken up, who is now gone out of the world unto the Father [c]; from banishment, unto a kingdome [d]; from the prison, unto the palace [e]; from darknesse, unto light [f]; from death unto life [g]; unto security from dangers [h]; from labour unto rest [i]; and from all maner of miseries unto everlasting felicity [k].

c Mat. 5.48.
d Mat. 25.34
e Phil. 1.23.
f Rev. 22.5.
g Rev. 21.4.
h Rev. 7.16, 17.
i Rev. 14.23.
k Rev. 22.5.

Happy is the soule that now enjoyeth

oyeth her reward, triumphing in
ee her Lord!

But, alas, that my Countrey is so
ng kept from me! 1 Pſ.120.5.

How graciouſly and mercifully
ouldeſt thou deale with mee, if
ickly I were called away, and bid-
en to come unto thee, that where
ou are, I might be alſo!

Oh that I had beene taken out
f this world, before ever I had
owne the filthineſſe of the ſame,
d before I was affraid to offend
en in ſmall things! how happy
en had I been? But now, the lon-
e here I live, the more I wander
om thee, and do ſin in too too ma-
y things.

Woe is mee, what have I done?
las, I have followed the deſires of
e fleſh, and have drawn vanity to
y ſelfe with ropes: but godlineſſe
ave abandoned, abhorred inno-
ncie, and added ſinne unto ſinne:
that now, to my grief, I finde that
ne which I have ſometime read m, m Iſa.3.11.
*e be to the wicked, it ſhall bee evill
ith him.*

Too too late almoſt I have retur-
d unto my God, yea very late it
as ere I began to amend, and then

too

too but slowly went I on; I was not zealous enough in my proceeding. I did not increase in zeale, but which is worser, I waxed cooler and cooler.

Hence it was that many times I was very loth to die, because my guilty conscience still told me I had not lived as I should have done.

Notwithstanding, in consideration of the dangerous temptations (whereunto I am subject) and that my sins might not encrease, many a time have I wished for death: and into these words have I burst, in praying:

Oh that now God in mercy would take mee out of this world, that I might sin no more upon earth! O that God speedily would vouchsafe to take me away, and make an end of my labours, in what an happy state should I then be!

But, Lord, all things must be even as thou wilt. If thou mindest to doe that which I require, let it forthwith be accomplished: but otherwise, thy will be done.

I may utter out my desire, and the misery which I endure, not only to him which is ignorant there-

but that thereby I may finde some comfort to my soule.

I know I am not yet ready as I ought to bee, for my conscience is greatly out of quiet.

And what marvell though I, a sinner, doe stand in feare, seeing many even of the holy Fathers were afraid, because thou judgest not as man doth. n 1 Sam. 16. 17.

But how shall I prepare my self? it were good for me to prepare my self against that time, which may come this day before to morrow for any thing I know. Ioh. 8. 15, 16.

Therefore I will more firmely alter my purpose: I will bewaile all my negligences passed: I will sacrifice my self to thee, and wholly and henceforth commend my selfe unto thy mercy, O Lord.

O Lord, my God, all my works doe stand at thy o mercy: and without thy mercy I have no merits. And this is mine hope, this is all my trust. o Eph. 2. 6.

But how fareth it with a good and pure conscience? What saith the humble and devout soule? Come, saith she, Lord p Jesus, O come, and tarry not, untie my sinnes, loose my fetters, p Rev. 22. 20.

fetters, bring me out of prison, out of the lake of miserie and mire clay [q].

q Ps. 40. 2.

I have waited patiently for thee, O Lord, incline to me and hear my cry. Leave mee not any longer in this wicked world.

Let it content thee that hitherto I have striven, that so long I have been in exile; that I have not deserved to enjoy thee, nor to see thee face to face [r].

r 1 Cor. 13. 12.

Grant me to enjoy the long desired joy, which no time shall end, nor troubles overshadow.

Rev. 22. 4.

Shew me thy countenance, which the Angels continually behold [s].

s Mat. 18. 10.

Let thy voice bee heard in mine eares, which they without ceasing do heare.

Come Lord Jesu, and take me out of this forrein Countrey; call mee, wretch, home unto my Country [t], and restore mee a sinner unto my former purity.

t Heb. 11. 12, 13.

Come gracious Redeemer [u], make mee partaker of thine eternall glorie.

u Mat. 1. 21.

It is high time that I return unto thee, it is now time that I commit my body to the earth, whereout

was taken [x].

x Gen. 2, 7.

The matter is not great where the body be laid, or how it be handled, if so be the soule bee safe, and come unto thee.

Let my spirit doe well, which I commend into thine hands, and let my flesh rest in hope to be raised up againe in the last [y] day. For wheresoever it be buried, it can never bee lost, or hid from thee.

y 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52, 53.

Remove me from the companie of men, and joyne me to the society of thy Saints. For this temporall life is irkesome to me: but to think of the day of eternall glory, rejoyceth mine heart.

Oh, let not the old [z] serpent withstand mee at my departure out of Egypt: let not the enemy bark against me in the gate: let neither Satan with his ougly sight terrifie, nor the horror of death trouble me, but let thine holy Angels faithfully assist, stoutly ayd, valiantly protect, lovingly receive, and joyfully bring me unto the everlasting felicity of thy celestiall Paradise.

z Rev. 12. 9.

And mercifull, lovely, and blessed Jesu, doe thou graciously, I beseech thee, behold mee: and cast

mee not out of the number of thy servants: but remember, O Son of God, how thou hast redeemed mee
a Eph.1.3.7. 1 Pet.1.18, 19. with thy precious [a] bloud.

Receive me into glory, and that in thy mercy and goodnesse, because greatly have I wished to solemnize a passeover with thee.

Oh happy day of my desired reward. Come blessed houre of blessed passage, which long I have desired, and kept before mine eyes.

What now have the troubles and
b Rom.8.18. afflictions in the world hurt [b] mee? What am I the worse for the contempt, labour and humiliation for thy names sake?

Thou hast been my life, and now
c Phi.1.24. death will be to me an [c] advantage, and to bee with thee in thy kingdome, will be absolute felicity.

Now praise and glory be to thee,
d Ioh.11.25. e Act.2.26. who art the life of such as [d] live, the hope of those which [e] die, the salvation and rest of all which trust in
f Ps.19.7. Psal.34.8. Pro.16.20. [f] thee.

CHAP.

CHAP. 8.

A meditation of one dead unto the world, yet alive in Christ.

Turn away mine eye from regarding vanity. a Ps. 119. 37.

Oh Jesu which art the true b life, which never shall have end; give mee grace, that through love of thee I may bee consumed, through love wounded, through love killed, that the flesh prevaile not over me. b Ioh. 11. 5.

I am not as yet throughly dead to the world, but the old man yet liveth in c me, raising up within mee much contention, and desires of manifold evils, and making the nights bitter, and the dayes tedious unto mee. c Rom. 7. 23.

Oh when will it fall out, that boldly I may say, I thought my selfe as a dead man! For he which dead is, doth weigh neither the praises of men, nor the reproaches of the malignant, because hee is dead.

Hee which touching the flesh is

dead, neither ſpeaketh, nor ſmelleth, nor taſteth, nor exerciſeth any work, yea, hee neither heareth alſo the vanity of this world: againe, he regardeth not curious and beautifull things, enticing unto the love of ſome vile thing upon earth.

And hee which is dead to the world, is not in the world, but in God, to whom hee liveth; even as *Paul* to the beloved Diſciples doth ſay [d], *Ye are dead, and your life is hid with God in Christ.*

d Col.3.3.

This man doth ſo ſpeak, ſo think, ſo behold things without, as though they were not. For the things which are ſeen, are temporall and vain [e]: but the things which are not ſeen, are eternall [f].

e 1 Ioh.2.17

f 2 Cor.4.18

Hither doth hee caſt his eye: hither doth hee haſten: hither is his deſire: for theſe things doth he labour: to attaine theſe things is all his ſtudie [g].

g Col.3.1,2.

Theſe things hee wiſheth, theſe things hee loveth, theſe things hee ſeeketh, theſe things he ſavoureth, even which are within, and ſecret, to wit, great good things, ſoveraign and eternall things, of which hee cannot think too often, becauſe they

they are exceeding precious, and sweet and delectable, and more then [h] utterable. h 1 Cor. 2. 9.

This man is farre estranged from present[i] things, and breatheth altogether after things [k] eternall, having the dominion over the sensuall appetite. i Gal. 6. 14. k Col. 3. 2.

For the flesh seeketh outward, desireth pleasant, loveth present, loatheth absent, flyeth all sharp and bitter things, which notwithstanding are good for the [l] soul. Whence it commeth, that it will not suffer the spirit to be at rest, but layeth before it sundry fantasies, which are scarce to bee spoken, and in truth not to be accounted of. l Rom. 8. 4, 5. &c.

But he which is endued with the grace of spirituall fortitude, may with more ease subdue the insolent motions of the flesh, singing in the word of the divine [m] power, *The Lord is with mee, therefore I will not feare what flesh can doe unto me.* m Ps. 118. 6.

Therefore, albeit this sensuality doth move battell, and the voice of the flesh doth secretly [n] murmure; yet doth not the spirituall man easily consent; for greater is the force of the divine soule which in- n Rom. 8. 13.

wardly doth comfort.

This man now and then ſo ſweetly, ſo ſtrongly, and ſo earneſtly is drawne, ravished, and in love with God, that ſcarcely he doth ſee, and perceive the things about him, and be heard in the world: becauſe he is
o Mat. 6, 21. not there, but ° elſewhere: not below, but aloft even with God, and in God, which moveth the ſpirit within him, and erecteth, and as it were carrieth it away in a fiery chariot, that at the length it may enjoy him in an happy, and holy, and long wiſhed deſire of his heart.

This man is ſeldome found (idle) abroad, becauſe his friend hath born him away. There quietly and alone he heareth his ſpeech, even the ſpeech of his beloved, and greatly doth rejoyce to hear the voice of his unſuſpected ſpouſe.

Neither ſtraight-way doth he caſt his phiall upon the ground to draw up vanity: but hideth the found treaſure, and ſhutteth it under lock and key, that the foot of pride come not in, and ſo all vertue doe periſh.
p Cant. 8. 6. For thus he ſaith to ° him, *Set me as a ſeale on thine heart*, and ſo forth, as it followeth in that place.

It

of the Imitation of Christ.

It is good to seal the heart, and to keep it, lest the beloved goe back, and fly away: because hee seeketh and visiteth above all, a pure and an humble [q] heart.

[q] Mat. 5. 8. Mat 11. 29.

These things hee thinketh with himselfe, and is astonished at that good thing which passeth all sense, and gifts. Yea still hee wandereth, & enquireth diligently, what thing is this? and exceedingly rejoyceth, for that Manna is come down from heaven.

And hee which ministreth true bread from [r] heaven, doth give also a good understanding to the taster, that he may know, how every good giving and every gift is from above, and commeth downe from the Father of [s] lights.

[r] Ioh. 6. 31, 32.

[s] Iam. 1. 17.

This word now, saith he, is from [t] God: Without him there is nothing: I have all things from him.

[t] Ioh. 1. 3.

Furthermore, this spirituall man, hee wondereth and lamenteth that hee so lightly esteemeth so excellent a good thing, by the which he is not a little blessed; and why also hee doth not often bend his heart to heare and to see that, then the which nothing is more sweet, and

blessed to bee desired.

And would to God henceforth I might thus doe. For this exceedingly doth delight me, and more will delight me, the more I give my selfe unto these meditations.

Oh that my beloved would come into mine heart, that I might taste the sweetnesse of his apples.

Oh that hee would decline unto me, and shew himselfe to me, and me to himselfe. He is my felicity, and mine onely delight.

Now begin I to covet, and desire, and greatly to love this good thing, in whom all good things are [u]: this joy, in whom is all joy: this one thing, in whom are all things, small and great, base and high: yet nothing created, but without all conceit of man, the beginning and the end of all the good things which he hath [x] formed.

u Act.17.28.

x Rev.1.8.17

Hence it is, that now and then I would throughly bee replenished with this good thing, and filled with that so heavenly joy: and I covet after a sort even to be swallowed up and consumed utterly of him, that mine insatiable desire might once be satisfied in such sort, that nothing in

mee

mee might be mine, but his onely whose the fire and heat of love is, whose this wonderfull work is also, that so I might the more greedily be carried to him-ward, & bee made one spirit together with him.

Notwithstanding, all this doth not puffe up the godly man, or make him to thinke himselfe some-what, or to despise others, or to judge inferiors: for he knoweth that whatsoever hee hath, commeth not of himselfe, but it is the free gift of God, that thereby he is not to waxe proud, when hee perceiveth himselfe to be so comforted of the Lord. y 1 Cor. 4. 5.

For he seeketh not the praise of man, he careth not for forrain favour, but he seekth the beloved, his praise and his favour he onely desireth, in whom hee hath all things, and shall finde more then all these things: because hee preferreth his love, his sweetnesse, and the joyfull enjoying of him before all transitory things: and his honour hee seeketh & sigheth for above all things else. And therefore hee cannot be proud, nor boast of any thing.

(God) he is his glory, his praise,

z 2 Cor. 1. 3. and his [z] comfort. God (even) hee is his true and perfect joy, his soveraigne and sole happinesse, all his desire and perfection. And which more is, hee would have others also thus to rejoyce with him, and to enjoy such felicity without end both in this world, and in heaven too.

For this is his desire and prayer, that God would reveale himselfe to all men, and that he would vouchsafe to convert and draw all unto him, that he alone might be praised and glorified: for he is both love it a 1 Ioh. 4. 8. [a] selfe, and such a fountain of loue as never can be drawn dry. For hee doth more love all men, then all men (set together) can love him.

Notwithstanding, it liketh him wel, if any man hath a desire to love him from the bottome, although he cannot sound unto the depth. For he in loving devoureth, vanquisheth and surpasseth all.

CHAP.

CHAP. 9.

A desire of the soule, that no earthly creature may carry her away unto vanitie.

BEhold, I would take my flight far off, and lodge in the [a] mountaines. a Psal. 55. 7.

Oh how profitable, how sweet, and how joyfull a thing it is to sit solitary in silence, to talk with God, and to enjoy the onely good thing, in which are all good [b] things! b Iam. 1. 17.

Would to God I were so conjoyned to that simple and onely good thing, that I might bee moved with none affections and distractions of transitory things, nor curiously fasten mine eyes upon any creature, and visible thing.

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Rom. 7. 24.

Alas, how often dyeth my soule for the creatures which shee loveth! oh many times shee forgetteth her Creator, and is carried away for their sakes!

Mine

The fourth booke

Mine unstable minde now willeth this thing, now that thing, now it is here, now there, seeking but not finding rest in creatures: because there is no creature which can yeeld full
d Eccles.1.8. satiety to bee [d] enjoyed, though it hath some delectation for use.

The heart of man is unsearchable,
e Ier.17.9. and who can know [e] it? O Lord,
f Ps.4.11. thou knowest the thoughts of men,
g 1 Tim.1.17 that they are [f] vaine.
h Ps 139.7, 8, &c. O eternall [g] God, most high and [h] infinite, the
i Act 17. 24. [i] Creator, and Governour of all
k Ps 97.1. [k] things, I am thy [l] creature, which thou hast made by thy
l Ps 100.3. & 119.73. power.

Thou hast made me that I should love thee, and gladly would I love thee, but I cannot as I would.

For I am fettered with vain love, and with clammy affection of transitory things: from which, while I would rid my selfe, hardly, or not at all can I so do without great pain.

Oh how soon would they flie and perish, if thou Christ wert sweet and didst savour in my nostrils.

Notwithstanding, sometime through the sight of the minde, I do behold thine invisible things, by the
m Rom.1.20 creation of the [m] world, and thee also.

so the soveraigne felicity, the true and eternall God.

And gladly would I continue in these meditations: but forthwith, I know not with what winde I am blowne away from them, and held down like a miser by the love and weight of visible things. n Wis. 9. 15.

Behold, I firmely doe purpose in mine heart, as it were making a covenant between me and thee, that for thy noble and precious love, I will neither love nor look upon any creature, but will contemne all things, yea my selfe and all o mine: but straight-way worldly, fleshly, and familiar cogitations do ascend into mine heart, as though in them were a certaine felicitie, and as though, if I contemned them, I were to forgo some great good thing: and these bear a good countenance, but they hide the wofull end, shewing what is present, but hiding the inconvenience that will ensue, as though every where, and in all creatures thou art to bee sought, and that nothing were to be neglected or despised, which hath been made of my God: and thus they with-drew mee oftentimes from my purpose, and o Rom. 8. 35.

and at the length utterly seduce me.

Oh how vaine and deceitfull, and almost nothing, are things which now stand and flourish, proved to
p Ioh. 2. 15, 16, 17. p be, which flying away after their sudden joyes, doe leave me among the thornes and bryars of a guilty conscience.

But woe is mee, Lord, yea woe againe to me, because so soon I have beleeved and assented to vanity, and so quickly forsaken thee, which
q Ioh. 14. 6. art the q truth.

Oh, how greatly have I sinned even in this, that I have not sticken to thee alone, neglecting all things
r Luk. 18. 29, 30. r else!

For I was made to love and to enjoy thee: but by following after creatures inordinately, I have lost thee, and found no rest for mine
s Eccles. 1. 8. heart in them s neither.

But turne me unto thee, O Lord, and leave me not in earthly things, thou which hast vouchsafed to promise celestiall things to such as fol-
t Mat. 19. 8. Luk. 9. 23. low t thee.

CHAP.

CHAP. 10.

1 *A comparison between earthly and heavenly ioyes:*
2 *With a prayer for grace to contemne this transitory world.*

MY *soule hath refused* [a] *comfort.* a Ps. 77.

Wander thou not after deceitful vanities and madnes, O my soul, but turn to the Lord thy God, for hee is the fountain of all [b] comfort. b 2 Cor. 1. 3.

Whatsoever thou seekest either among men or among creatures, thou shalt lose it, and shalt well perceive it to perish: For though I grant, they may yeeld some shew of comfort, yet sure I am, nothing doth [c] continue. c Ioh. 2. 15, 16, 17.

Why so vainely wilt thou be deceived? It is egregious folly to beg of a beggar, when hee that is rich will give abundantly. Every creature is but poore to minister comfort unto us; but God which is rich in [d] mercy, giveth to all men [e] liberally, and reproacheth no man, if thou for thy part diligently doe [f] seeke. 1 Cor. 7. 31. d Eph. 2. 4. e Iam. 1. 5.

f Mat. 7.7. f seek, and patiently expect his leisure.

Returne, O my soule, returne
g Gen. 8.9. downe unto Noah in the g Arke, even unto Christ in thine heart, because it is not good to abide long abroad.

See thou refuse outward comfort,
h 1 Ioh. 2.15 if inwardly thou wilt be h refreshed. Doe not thou with the Crow abide
i Gen. 8.7. without the i arke, but with speed avoid the carcasse. Return thou an hungred, and Christ so will feed
k Ioh. 6.31, 32, 35. thee with the bread of k life

If urgent necessity, or weakness hold thee abroad, take heed thou make no stay, but with speed get thee home, lest thou be either overwhelmed with the floud of words, or comprehended in the snares of divelish tentation.

Many traps are laid for the wandering soule; and great safety hath the quick returning Dove: which not finding where to set her foot,
Gen. 8.9. made haste to come back unto Noah in the ship.

Go thou therfore unto thy secret place, and abide there, yea let it be a griefe to thee to be elsewhere.

Oh blessed is the soule which hath

hath a cleere conscience before [m] God, and is not delighted with any vain [n] thing, which is neither polluted with loving any [o] thing, nor wearied with extremely hating any [p] man.

m Mat.5.8.
n Lu.28.29, 30.
o 1 Ioh.2. 15,16.
p Mat.5.22, 23,&c.

Blessed is the soule that seeketh no comfort of creatures, but fixeth all her hope in the [q] Lord.

q Ps.40.4.

Blessed is the soule which refuseth all outward and temporall quietnesse, and whatsoever belongeth unto the welfare of the body: and which for the love of Christ doth willingly embrace both paine and [r] poverty.

r Mat.19.29.

Blessed is the soul which commendeth her selfe to God, that hee may doe with her even as hee thinketh good.

Blessed is the soule which at no time seeketh her own [s] glory, which desireth at no time to have her owne will done: but continually mindeth, loveth and preferreth the glory and will of God above all things.

s Ier.9.24. 1 Cor.1.31.

Blessed is the soule which doth estrange her selfe from whatsoever is [t] temporall, and keepeth her selfe pure and undefiled before God

t 1 Ioh. 2. 15,16.

u Ps.15. 1,2. God in all her u dealings.

O rejoice and be thou much glad, thou which art such a soul: for thou maiest abide in secret and celestiall cogitations, and so magnifie the Lord, day and night.

Blessed and blessed againe is the
x Col.3.1,2. soule whose desires are to x heaven-
y Ezc.11.22 ward, whose hands and armes are
z Mat.5.8. out-stretched even as the two wings of the y Cherubins; whose eyes are pure to behold z God, whose inward power and strength doth go altogether, and ascend, and returneth not, untill it hath him whom only shee loveth before all things. And when she hath found him, she followeth him whithersoever he will have her.

And when he speaketh, he rejoyceth to heare her make answer, saying; I am thine onely beloved and thee elected. I am thine exceeding
a Gen.15.1. great a reward. Bee thou neither proud in prosperity, nor impatient in adversity. Consider how they which love mee are comforted in mee. How sweetly, thinkest thou, I will intreat them, when they shall bee received unto the eternall rest, after that the troubles of the body

and ſoule are laid aſide ?

Oh that I enjoyed ſuch pleaſure, as doth the holy ſoule, when the ſenſes being aſleep, ſhe is carried aloft, and elevated above her ſelf, beloved, and coupled to God by the bond of moſt hearty friendſhip! Oh my God, which art the treaſure of mine [b] heart, thou knoweſt right well how this would bee the onely comfort of mine inward griefe. But thou art the giver, and the pourer in of this oyntment.

b Mat.6.21.

Thou [c] teacheſt, thou exhorteſt, thou cheriſheſt, thou comforteſt, thou carrieſt, thou upholdeſt, thou guideſt out and bringeſt back, thou doeſt with the ſoule whom thou haſt choſen, even as thou wilt, and whatſoever thou doeſt and wilt, it is all good.

c 2 Tim.3.16

But I who am as a ſowre veſſell, altogether unworthy to receive the infuſion of thy good ſpirit, do humbly crave that plentifully it may ſo ſpout forth upon mee, that I may both taſte the ſweetneſſe of thine inward love, and alſo perceive thoſe ſacred pleaſures, the which, I doubt not, the religious ſoule doth feel by thy grace.

The fourth booke

I did ſmell the celeſtiall perfume
afar off, when I did meditate certa
inward cogitations of the mind
concerning the ſoul: but Lord, tho
knoweſt how ſeldom, how little I
think of eternall things, how ofte
words do wither, how rude the u
derſtanding, how unquiet the co
ſcience, how my heart is troubled
darkned, and irreligious, and only
through mine owne default.

Notwithſtanding, ſometime ſet
king a way unto ſpirituall matters
having taken my cogitations with
mee in ſecret, I begin ſeriouſly t
call into my remembrance the goo
things of the bleſſed ſoule: ho
great are the celeſtiall joyes, an
ſpirituall delights which are in he
heart: what peace, what tranquilli
ty, what hope and rejoycing in Go
her Saviour, whoſe words be ſweet
and face beautifull. And theſe co
gitations, though ſhort they en
dure, yet when they come, bleſſed
the houre.

And I thus thinking, and thou en
lightning my darkneſſe, I do finde
juſt complaints upon my ſelf, and by
privie holes of grace, I perceive
how ſuch and ſuch is the ſoule in
wardly

ardly vnited unto thee, and that so
nd so thou hast spoken to her.
She is still from all things sensible,
nd thou in the spirit speakest to
er of invisible matters.
She seemeth as it were to be for-
ken of all creatures, and after an
nspeakable manner thou dost com-
rt her.
So that I said again in my heart,
o to the sinfull [c] soul, to the grie- c Deu.29.26. Gal.3.10.
ed [d] conscience, to the man which d Pro.3.33. & 24.19.
neither hot nor [e] cold, destitute of e Rev.3.15, 16.
e light of grace, and of spirituall
mfort, seeking teares, and yet sin-
eth none.
But peace be to him which unfei-
ly doth love Christ, and never
neth aside the eyes of his heart
om his [f] Saviour: but continually f Col.3.8.
deth the things which are plea-
g in his eyes.
For he shall walk in peace and e-
ity, and no stranger shall partici-
te of his pleasure. He shall well
ceive, that his rest is good, and
at how sweet his Lord God is, in
om he [g] trusteth. He shall set him g Ps.34.
t from outward tumults, and
s hearty desire expect his pro-
rous comming. Lo, thus worketh
the

the Lord in his elected vessels.

Hee which commeth unto him shall not returne empty away: for cheerfully hee bestoweth upon the thirsty drink, and bread upon the
h Mat.25.35 h hungry.

O my God, when thou entrest to the house of the soule which loveth thee, wilt thou not feed her with thy milke? yea, and bring her sometime beside her selfe, through thine abundant sweetnesse, to the taking of thee without any corporall similitude?

O truth, truth, of what force and power is love!

Then wilt thou speak thy word her all secretly, and shew the things that shall be, and have been in happy charitie, and fruition, when the words of man shall no more be heard.

From henceforth thou wilt encourage her no whit to doubt any more of eternall rest, and of the fellowship of Saints: but now by deferring the token of speciall grace, thou makest her the more able to hope for
i Rom. 8.24. things shee seeth i not, and to despise present things which by sense is comprehendeth.

O mercifull God, be mindfull of me a poor beggar, even of thy great mercy; and ſend the true bread from heaven, thy good word ſo full of comfort and grace.

k 1 Cor.1.3.
l Ioh.6.31, 32, &c.

CHAP. 11.

That all comfort and pleaſures are in God.
A prayer that all people may glorifie the Lord.
The bleſſed ſtate of good men.
That we are to be ready againſt the comming of our Saviour Chriſt.

ALl my bones ſhall ſay, Lord, who is like unto a *thee?* There is b one, and like to him there is none, even my God it d is, to whom, whatſoever is compared, is nothing.

a Pſa.35.10.
b Deu.6.4.
c 1 Kin.8.23
d Ioh.20.17.
e Pro.3.15. Iſa.46.9.

My God is entirely to bee loved, and a moſt faithfull friend, which never forſaketh the ſoule that loveth h him, but continually abideth with her for company. And if ſometime he hide himſelf, and ſuffer her to be troubled, it is not done of him to deſtroy, but to try & her, to purge

f Ioh.13.1.
g Iam.1.12.
h her,

h Wisd. 3. 6. i Ps. 119. 71. her, and to instruct [i] her, so that even then hee forsaketh not, but the more wisely instructeth, that every one may see what he is of himselfe, and how farre hee is come forward (in religion).

O my beloved, thou art all faire & lovely, but not to the flesh, but to the minde: nor to the eye or sense, but to the faithfull soule; to him k Mat. 5. 8. which hath a pure heart [k], to him which is altogether addicted unto 1 2 Cor. 4. 18 things invisible and spirituall [l].

So that whoso d. sireth to be united to thee by a religious affection, he must of necessity mortifie in himselfe all fleshly motions, and above all, retain a pure conscience. For thou art much displeased then, when a man doth goe unto frail creatures to seek consolation.

And therefore thou callest me in- m Lu. 14. 27. wardly to love thee [m], and thou commandest that I waite for thee, for then I shall finde thee, when I doe humble my selfe, and wish that which thou wilt.

And this shall be all my felicity, even freely to serve thee, neither dreading any losse, nor seeking my gaine: because thou allowest the soule

soul which purely doth love thee n.
Oh blessed is hee, which both in life and death sticketh only to thee!
But as for me, I am far-away cast oftentimes from thy favour, by loving, & that both inordinately, and undiscreetly, transitory things. But that I may not perish with them, I with all speed will returne, and behold in them thy glory o, and direct all my cogitations to thee-ward.
O my Lord and God, which of nothing hast made all things p, give me grace for all things to praise thy Name.
For all power q, wisdome r, goodnesse and mercy is thine s; thine also is everlasting glory and majesty t.
Thy Kingdome is an everlasting kingdome u; and thy dominion indureth throughout all ages.
Thou ordereſt all things x, both things above, and things in earth.
Thou knoweſt all things y, and poſſeſſeſt all things z; nothing doth reſiſt a, or trouble thee: but quietly thou ruleſt the world, and maſteſt the rebellious to ſtoope, and to ſerve b.
Thou art privie to all things which are done in the world c; and before

n Mat.10.37.
o Rom.1.11.
p Gen.1.1,2,&c. Ioh.1.1,3. Act.17.24.
q Rev.4.8.
r Iam.1.17.
s Mat.19.17.
t Rev.7.12.
u Pſal.145.13.
x Wiſd.8.1.
y Eccluſ. 23.19.
z Pſal.95.4. Eccleſ.9.1.
a Dan.4.32.
b Wiſd.12.3,4, &c.
c Dan.9.3.12.
e Eccluſ. 23.19.

they were done, thou knewest their
d Isa. 46.10. ends d.

Thou art the God both of heaven
e Ezra 5. 11. and earth e, the Creator of things
f Psal. 89. 11. Psal. 115. 15. visible and invisible f, the governour
g Psal. 47. 1, 2, 6, &c. of the whole world g, and the dispo-
h Eccles. 43. 5, 6, &c. ser of the seasons h.

O blesse thy servants, I beseech thee, dispersed far and wide over the world, yet serving thee most religiously. Make them (constantly) to sound forth thy praise, and in all places with one voice to glorifie thy name.

Stir up their hearts firmly to love thee, and grant that all their enterprizes may take a good end.

Oh how gracious, and how good
i 1 Cor. 2. 9. art thou to such as love thee! how
sweet art thou to them which fear
k Psal. 34. 8. thee k!

They which have smelt thy sweetnesse, know thereby the better how both to think and speak. For thy sweetnesse surpasseth all sweetnesse, and thy pleasures doe sweeten all bitternesse.

O Lord my God, holy men have spoken, and Prophets have talked of thee.

All the godly from the world be-
ginning

ginning have beleeved in the, have ſerved thee, have glorified thee both with ſacrifices and oblations, they have praiſed and bleſſed thine holy name: becauſe they have both acknowledged thee to be the Creator and maker of the univerſall world, and alſo truſted in thee above all things [l]. l Heb.11.2.3. &c.

They have knowne thee in their viſions, for thou haſt revealed thy name to them; and beſide thee they knew no God. They obſerved the law of thy commandements, which thou gaveſt them.

They followed not the foolish imaginations of falſe gods: but they worſhipped thee which liveſt for ever [m], the Creator of all things [n]. m 1 Tim.1.17. n Act.17.24. Heb.1.2.

They lifted up their voice to thee with thankſgiving: becauſe from on high thou foundeſt in their ears, ſaying [o], *I am that I am. Before me there was no God formed* [p], *neither ſhall there be after me.* I have ordained the things which ſhall be, and I forget not whatſoever is paſt. o Exod.3.14. p Iſa.43.12.

This when they heard and underſtood, they caſt the eies of their faith afarre off, beleeving that God will ſave us, and that hee which ſhall

q Heb.10.37. come, wil come, and will not tarry q.

Knowing these things aforehand, they were not a little comforted, & marvellously astonished at the presence of the glory to come; they fainted, but afterward comming by little and little to themselves, and with joy beholding the power of God approaching, they said, Hee is, even hee is the Lord our God, and we have none other. He hath taken us, and he will save us. Hee cannot r 2 Tim.2.13. deny himselfe r, because he is faithfull. As wee have heard, so we have f 1 Ioh.1.1,3. seen f; as we have beleeved, so we have spoken, and borne witnesse to t Ioh.3.11, the truth t.

Once the Lord did speak, and it u Psal.33.9. was done u. He said, My counsell x Isa.46.10. shall stand x; yours shall come y Psal.33.10. to nought, O ye sons of men y.

Woe unto them which imagine z Mich.2.1. evill z, and afterward make a scoffe at the word of God.

Woe unto you which doe faine religion out of your own brain, and are exalted in your owne power.

Heare the Word of the Lord, ye which serve the Lord: know ye that he hath a controversie with the a Hos.4.1. inhabitants of the earth a.

To

To turne away your selves, it is not good; stand yee therefore and consider his waies.

Return you and come unto him, so will he joyfully receive you into favour; for the Lord is gracious and mercifull [b].

b Exod.32.6.

He keepeth not his anger as man doth [c], but pardoneth all sins, yea and moreover he restoreth the former grace with the latter.

c Ioan 4.2. Hos. 11.9.

Onely return you with all your hearts, and dedicate your selves wholly and unfainedly to his service. Thus do the Saints speake in mine eares.

That which musick is at a banquet, and sweet smelling frankincense in a censer, even that is the word of God in a pure heart.

And thy Saints, Lord, filled with thy Spirit, have thus sounded forth the memory of thine abundant sweetnesse; and have left their words unto us to bee sounded abroad.

But my speech oftentimes is stopped, so that it hath no passage to ascend. But if that fire come from above, then shall my tongue be hot: and if it once be enflamed, I shall forthwith be consumed.

I shall not be able to stand in the presence thereof; for as the wind driveth away chaffe, so shall sorrow be expelled from the heart. And as the rust by the fire: so shall my sins be consumed.

The fire of God which consumeth all things, shall sweep the floore of mans heart. Descend, and get up, touch me a little, and I shall flee.

Things passed shall be as though they had never beene, and those to come, shall not be accounted of; for all sins shall utterly be forgotten.

Old things shall passe away, new shall come abundantly; holy desires shall increase and rise up on all sides, whersoever the good spirit shall blow.

Feare shall depart, love shall possesse the hearts of all; all afflictions shall cease: for this alteration is by the hand of God.

Therefore that which I say, is not to mine owne, but to his praise.

The pensive hath comfort, the hungry, bread; the thirsty drink; the sick are healed; the wavering, stayed; the weak strengthened; the weary quieted; the hopelesse comforted; the complainer pitied;

to

to the blinde sight; to the wandring a ready way; to the knocker the gate is opened.

He which doubted is now resolved; he which staggered, is now strengthened; he that diligently enquired, is once entertained joyfully by mother charity. The friend commeth more joyfully to meet, then is the soul desirous to speak with him.

L. Lo now am I present, saith he, say on, what new thing hath fallen out? What, have you forgotten what you are to suffer and to doe for my sake?

I. Yet this stayed me not, being desirous to goe forward with him. So straight-way I mounted aloft; and forgot all mine affliction.

He would not by and by discomfort the party so longing to abide with him: but with gentle words he said, that in due time it should bee performed.

L. Thy desire is good, and request unto me doth like me wel: notwithstanding, it may not presently bee granted.

Goe thy way, and get home to thine owne house, and declare to thine acquaintance what the

Lord hath done for thee.

Say unto them, Prepare your hearts every one of you; and lay downe the heavie burden of sinne; and be ye warie, and strong to resist the snares of Satan d.

d Iam. 4. 7.

Watch and pray, lest ye fall into tentation e.

e Mat. 26. 41. Mark 14. 38.

I will come shortly, look that I finde you ready.

Loe, I have warned you aforehand.

CHAP. 12.

1 *The desire of the soule after God.*
2 *The properties of God by the sundry titles ascribed unto him.*
3 *None commeth unto God, unless God draweth him.*

Say unto my soule, I am thy salvation a.

a Psal. 35. 3.

Oh, of what excellency art thou, my soule! what wonderful vertue is hidden in thee, that thou canst never bee at rest untill thou have attained perfect happinesse, and found the last end which thou so desirest! which once being

being knowne and found out, the care is gone.

Oh happinesse above all happinesse, O end without end, when shal I both without measure and everlastingly enjoy thee?

I finde many good things in this world; but they continue not [b], neither do they satisfie my desire [c].

But one thing is necessary [d]. This one thing is that I seek; this one thing I desire.

For one thing are all things [e]; and of one thing are all things [f]. If I get this thing, I shall be content: but if I enjoy it not, I shall continually be tossed, because many things cannot satisfie me.

What is this one thing? I am not able to say what it is; sure I am, I desire that, then which nothing either is, or may bee imagined either better or greater [g].

For this is not one thing among many things; but one thing above all things [h]. And it is my God, to whom if I stick, I shall doe well [i].

To him I say, to him I cry, when I say, *Say unto my soule I am thy salvation* [k].

O my soule, my longing soule,

b 1 Cor. 7. 31. a Ioh. 1. 15, 16. c Eccles. 1. 8.

d Luk. 10. 42.

e Isa. 43. 7. f Gen. 1. 1, 2, &c. Iohn. 1. 1, 3.

g Isa. 46. 5, 6, &c. Iob 41. 1, 2, &c.

h Ezra 5. 11. i Psal. 73. 8.

k Psal. 35. 3.

what more desirest thou? Is it not better for thee to cleave unto one thing, then unto many things? Of one thing are many things [l], but one thing is not of many things.

l Act. 17. 24.

Cease to seek many things, joyne thee to one, stick unto one: for in one thing all things consist.

Let others enquire after manifold and divers outward things: but do thou seek one inward good thing, and it is sufficient.

m Mat. 22. 5. Luk. 14. 18.

Lo, this man seeketh a farme [m]; that man travelleth about his merchandize, another heapeth up much gold and silver, another hunteth after pleasures and preferment, another visiteth his friends and kindred, another is merry with his acquaintance, another rideth unto cities and castles, another doth long to see divers countries of the world, another desireth wisdome, another preferment, another principality, another a kingdome: and thus one wisheth one thing, another man another thing, even as well among the spirituall sort, as among the secular. But few do think one thing, and (other things) purely and simply for one thing. And therefore they neither

neither doe finde any sure peace, nor yet favour the inward grace of the spirit.

For so many as are (the servants) of Christ, doe covet not temporall, nor earthly things, as though they were then jolly and glorious fellowes, if they abounded therewith. n Col. 3.2.

What then? Wilt thou say that the things which they seek for, doe touch thee. O devout soul! in truth thou canst not.

For my part, I detest all these things: for my good thing is but one thing. I love but one thing, I require but one thing: and this one thing is better to mee then all other things either in heaven or in earth.

If thou hast found such a good thing, my counsell is, that you hold and keep it for whose sake you have contemned all things. For having that, it shall not grieve you to want other things: nay, you will judge it reason for the getting thereof, that you doe both give o, and suffer all things p. o Phil. 3.8. p Rom. 8.35.38.

Now therefore, O my soule, seeke thou after so singular, and superexcellent a good thing.

So long as you live in the flesh, you are

are of necessity to seek: because the cannot too carefully be sought for, which can at no time sufficiently be comprehended q.

q 1 Cor. 2. 9.

But then shall you cease seeking, when the houre of enjoying is once come. For then shal he be all in all, even he which alone is all-sufficient for all, and every man.

r 1 Cor. 15. 28.

And although there, too, he must be sought, where hee is continually found: yet is hee not there sought with labour, as in this world, but with surpassing pleasure and love.

f 1 Cor. 13. 13.

What he is in this life to the godly, it may bee declared by his manifold Titles: and such as have experience (of his goodnesse) know very well how it may be shewen.

Notwithstanding, consider what the names of God are, as I have learned them in the school of experience: I will recite a few, but the grace of his Spirit may put you in minde of many moe beside.

Loe, hee is a spouse t, to such as love; but to such as still serve him in feare, a dreadfull Lord u.

t Mat. 9. 15.

u Deut. 6. 13. Mat. 4. 10.

He is a father to good children x; but to the obstinately wicked, a severe Judge y.

x Mat. 6. 9.

y 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 12. 23.

To

To the sick, he is a Physician [z], and to the whole, wholesome food [a].

To the ignorant, a teacher [b], and to the obedient, an everlasting Saviour.

Hee is the way [d] for beginners, the truth for proceeders, the [e] life for the absolute performers of his holy will.

He is the hope [f] of repenters, and a surpassing comforter [g] of the righteous.

He is a crowne [h] for the humble, and a punishment [i] for the proud.

In darkness he is a light [k]; and in the night a lanterne [l].

He giveth medicine to the diseased soules, and much wine of comfort to the sorrowfull.

With such as stand to the barrell, hee standeth; with such as proceed in their journey, hee walketh; with such as fervently make haste, hee runneth; with such as mount in divine contemplation, he flyeth.

Doe you pray? he is present with you. Doe you reade? he is talking with you. Doe you meditate? he is still with you.

One and the same God worketh in all these things, shewing himself

to

z Mat. 9. 12.
a Ioh. 6. 55, 56.
b Ioh. 7. 10.
c Mat. 1. 21.
d Ioh. 14. 6.
e Ioh. 11. 25.
f Col. 1. 27.
1 Tim. 1. 1.
g Ioh. 14. 26.
h Luk. 2. 32.
i Rom. 9. 33.
k Ioh. 1. 8. 9. Ioh. 3. 19.
l Ioh. 8. 12.
1 Ioh. 1. 5.

to every one, even as hee thinks good: in his words there is no fault, and his works are past finding out.

For great and unsearchable are his judgements [m], and no man is to say unto him, Why doest thou so? or why doest thou chuse this man rather then that man [n].

m Rom. 11. 33.

n Isa. 45. 9, 10, 11. Rom. 9. 20, 21, &c.

It is folly for a man to reason against the Almighty: and all the will of Adams children is vain, and to no purpose.

How like you these things, and how doth God savour unto you?

S. He seemeth sweet unto me: neither am I offended at his works.

He is righteous [o], and who can rebuke him of ill-dealing [p]?

He that so doth, doth set himself against God, and shall be reproved of his irreprehensible light.

o Psal. 19. 137. p Ioh. 8. 46.

M. But what thou hast heard, what is it in his presence? scarce undoubtedly so much as a sparke, without that which is hidden within.

Ask you what that is? I must say, I know it not, it is altogether above my capacity, even as a certain cloud far off, whose beginning and end are unknowne.

And therefore meditate rather,

of the Imitation of Christ.

think more often upon the low e-
ate of Christs humanity, & do not
ount up too high, lest of his glori-
us majesty you be confounded.

But, forasmuch as burning love
oth now and then forget all reve-
ence and feare, you are (in that re-
pect) the more to be borne withall,
f sometime, being extremely set on
re with the love of Jesus, you doe
onsider not onely how he cryed in
he manger [q], and how hee hanged
pon the crosse [r]: but also how hee
eigneth now in heaven all glori-
ously [s], and ruleth all things under
heaven most wonderfully [t].

O most lovely Jesu, gladly doe I
follow thee in earth: but more glad-
ly would I follow thee unto heaven.
Where my treasure is, there would
mine heart be also [u].

Oh, thou art my treasure, thou
which art at the right hand of the
Father [x], art dearer unto me then
any creature. For my sake thou wert
incarnate, for my sake thou wast e-
levate.

Thou didst leave thy selfe an ex-
ample upon earth [y], thou keepest thy
selfe for a reward in the heavens.

Upon thee therefore mine eyes
are

q Luk.2.6.
r Mat.27.31, 32, &c.
s Phil.2.9, 10.
t Rev.1.5.
u Mat.6.21.
x Rom.8.34. Heb.1.3.
y Ioh.13.15.
1 Pet.2.21.

are fixed, and after thee doe my steps trace. To thee mine heart saith, My face seeketh thee; O Lord, I will continually seek thy face.

O Lord, how long wilt thou hide the sight of thy glory? Why hidest
a Iob 13.24. thou thy face a, and takest mee for thine enemy?

Thou knowest right well, my minde will be distracted hither and thither, and be diversly bent, until it be fast joyned to thee her friend in the heavens.

For the force of love knoweth not
b Cant 8.6,7. how to bee quiet b: but unceasingly maketh enquirie of her lover, sendeth forth messengers, and doubleth prayers: neither doth it so give over, because love will altogether possesse that which it desireth.

c Cant 1.3. Therefore draw mee c, that I may begin zealously to run after thee. I had needed to be drawne, and with great force to be drawne: For un-
d Ioh 6.44. lesse thou draw, none will come, none will follow, because every one is naturally inclined to himselfe-ward.

But if thou once draw, lo, then I doe hasten, then I run, then I waxe hot. But if thou do not draw, I doe neither

neither runne, nor seek, yea scarce have I any desire at all to follow. If thou reach out thine hand, I doe run so much the more swiftly, as thou forcibly dost draw.

This is the voice of my lover drawing e, *And when I am lift up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.* e Ioh.12.2,3.

O sweet Jesu, draw me after thee: and then not I only, but all shal run after thee by the savour of thine ointments f. f Cant.1.3.

First therefore draw mee after thee, then let others follow, seeing an example of good life.

But, that we may not waxe proud, it is good that we marke this withall, how that we began to run, not through our owne strength, but by the savour of thine ointments.

This is the heavenly drawing, without which no man can goe forward, no not so much as begin; as likewise thou didst say g: *No man can come unto mee, except my Father draw him.* g Ioh.6.44.

So that whom the Father draweth, he followeth thee and forsaketh himselfe.

He seemed to be well drawne that

saith

The fourth booke

saith [h]: *Master I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.* But every one hath not the gift to be so affected, neither is it a weak stomack that can so readily follow thee unto all things.

k Mat.8.19. Luk.9.77.

What let hast thou, O my soul, that thou didst not forsake all for Jesus sake? why so unwillingly do you depart from vaine and transitory things? What good can these worldly things doe you?

Behold, while you passe by mortall things, and visible creatures, willing to delight your self in them, you forget better things. While you so doe, you sever your self from the soveraigne good thing, and turne your minde from the true, blessed, and eternall life.

And therefore you shall continue miserable and wretched, full of grief and vexation [i].

i Eccles.2.17.

For turne your self on which side you will, and you shall finde matter of continuall sorrow, and much tediousnesse, untill thou turne againe unto thy Creator, because he is thy peace [k], and secure quietnesse.

k Ioh.6.33.

But, if thou neither make stay in earthly things, nor fasten thy foote

in

the mire, but rather behold and
ship in the glasse of worldly cre-
ures, not the figure which passeth
, but him whose image and l 2 Cor. 7. 31.
erscription it is, blessed art thou,
shalt never die. m Rev. 22. 4.
For, when thou seekest after these
ible things not to enjoy them,
beholdest them to the end to
orise the name of thy Creator, by
ing to thy selfe of his best and
st workes a kinde of a ladder
rewithall thou mayest ascend,
shalt be delivered so from thy
dy bowels of this world, and
roughly be coupled to thy desired
, which is above all things the
sest God for ever and ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. 13.

1 *How, and when the ſoule and God are united together.*
2 *The miſery where God is not preſent.*

MY Soule cleaveth unto thee [a].

O my God, thou true comforter, thou knoweſt how thou likeſt mee well, and how I take pleaſure daily to be talking with thee ſecretly alone.

But where may I ſeek thee, if happely I doe miſſe thee for an houre? who ſhall bring me unto thee?

Thou art God above all things [b], and I beneath all things a miſerable man. Thou art in heaven [c], and I in the world. Thou art moſt high, but I am poor, and a beggar.

Who ever hath meaſured the diſtance between heaven and earth? Far aſunder be they, but farther art thou from me, O God.

Who therefore ſhall unite me to thee? either thou muſt doe it, or none can.

[a] Pſal. 62. 8.
[b] Iſa. 46. 9.
[c] Mat. 6. 9.

But if thou wilt, it may ſpeedily be done. And thou knoweſt, how of myſelf I may eaſily fall: but that I ſtand, and go forward, it is of thy goodneſſe.

So that my ſoule dependeth upon the grace of thy ſpirit, and of the infuſion of thy ſpeciall favour.

If thou command, it ſhall be lifted up from the earth: but if thou turn away thy face, it ſhall bee greatly troubled.

But of thy wonted favour and mercy receive me, and let thy right hand guide mee wonderfully unto thee.

Heare this, all ye people [d], give eare, all ye that dwell in the world; for it is an eaſie thing with God to bring it to paſſe, as it is written, that the rich and poor may be all one. d Pſal. 49. 1.

I am poor, and lack many things; but this my God is rich, and wanteth nothing [e]. e Pſ. 50. 11, 12.

And although no great experience, yet have I an undoubted teſtimony to prove that the ſoule through grace may bee united to God.

My beloved is mine, ſaith he [f], *and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.* f Cant. 2. 16.

This

The fourth booke

This is the testimony of [illegible] friend, and his darling; of the [illegible] groome and the spouse: and it [illegible] very fit, and a strong testimony [illegible] the holy law.

g Ioh. 17. 21 The next is like to this g: I [illegible] *that they all may be one, as thou, [illegible] ther, art in me, and I in thee.*

Behold the notable testimonies [illegible] two books, whereby it plainely [illegible] peareth, that the soule through [illegible] ciall grace from above, may be [illegible] ked familiarly unto God.

And although it rarely comes [illegible] to passe: yet is it dearely to be [illegible] counted of, and not altogether [illegible] knowne to the lover. And again [illegible] though very hardly, yet may [illegible] fall out.

The soule therefore so conjoyn[illegible] to God, let no man dare to separ[illegible] or to trouble.

If thou dost wonder at this [illegible] velous union, wonder thou [illegible] marvell at the excellency of [illegible] goodnesse, and at the strange [illegible] singular uniting of the humane [illegible] dy (to his God-head).

He may doe what he will, [illegible] only doth great wonders h.

h Psal. 136. 4.

If thou lookest for merits, [illegible] shal[illegible]

finde, it is his good pleasure to
me it so.

O sweet society with Christ, and
nder the wings of Christ!

O gracious conjunction, full of
ve, and sweetnesse of the H. Ghost,
e which is perceived better then
ttered!

These things belong unto the soul
at is estranged from all worldly
mers, and is not delighted with
s present life: but is carried aloft
godly meditation.

The more the lover knoweth this,
e more am I ignorant. Notwith-
nding, gladly would I be in pre-
nce when the devout soule is in
ch an happy case.

And then is she so, when the spouse
d she is together at the noon day.
t then it fareth ill with her, and
n very ill too, if it happen that
sus be away; if the perfumes of
ace runne not from above; if no
easure she take in the holy Bible;
it be irkesome for her to continue
prayer and godly meditation; if
e clouds of the heart bee so thick,
d hurtfull cogitations doe so pre-
ail, that they cannot be restrained,
t doe labour to overwhelme in a
manner

manner all the former good thing

O Lord God, why doſt thou

What play is this? O bleſſed

what mean you hereby?

If it were not offenſive to

honour, I could wiſh to have

communication between thee

thy beloved.

Forasmuch as ſhee is ſo

deſirous of thy gracious

whereby ſhe may be nouriſhed

chaſte delights, I doe much

why ſometime you ſuffer her to

ſo deſolate. Thou paſſeſt by, and

eſt thy way as though ſhee

deſire unto thee. But ſhe is alone

penſive; for thus ſhe ſaith in effect

i Iſa. 26. 9. *With my ſoule have I deſired thee in*

night.

It is night with her, when

the true light, art not preſent:

that ſhee prayeth for thy preſence

that the darkneſſe of ſinne

hend her not. For ſhe feeleth

fold diſcommodities when thy

cious viſitation is taken from

For, had ſhe not ſuffered ſome

ſhe had never ſo earneſtly cried

to thee.

Another alſo, which was before

k Pſal. 63. 8. ſaid, cried thus[k], *My ſoul cleaveth*

to thee.

of the Imitation of Christ.

But I think no trouble is, or seemeth so troublesome to her, as the want of thy presence.

And no marvell, if through this want the wayward soul do languish away in sorrow. For thou art very hardly found at any time: and being found, she rejoyceth at thy return, hoping to spend the day merrily with thee: but thinking little of thy departure, shee suspected no adversity to come. But handling another matter secretly, thou often takest thy flight.

For thou departest suddenly out of her hands, when she cannot lay hold upon thee.

I doe praise thee: but in this how shall I praise thee? if thou hast any praise and sweetnesse, why doe you seeme to forgoe it in this deed.

If thou wert not, she might be offended. But shee can take none offence at thee, who so mightily dost love her.

If therefore any good reason bee signified under that lesson, O God shew it me.

For gladly would I understand the same: neither do I think it unnecessary to learn, though it be but little.

The fourth booke

Because no man of himself can be hold thy secret judgements, but [illegible] thy light which doth both inlighten dark, and drive away hurtful things.

What therefore may the cause be that sometime so secretly you withdraw your selfe from the soule, [illegible] not witting thereof?

Doe you love her, or no? If you doe love her, why then do you leave her, my beloved? If you love her not, why then have you visited her before time? Againe, if you love her not, why do you make return? why knock you at the doore? why enter you in again? What, is it of lightnesse that you doe so both goe and returne? God forbid.

But so often change doth not a little grieve her; yea, much it doth disquiet her. Yet the grief would be the lesser, if thou wouldst say plainly [l], *I do goe, and will come unto you, your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you* [m].

But now you cast out never a byword; only she thinketh upon that speech, which she well perceiveth to be performed in her selfe, how Jesus hid himselfe, and went out of the Temple [n].

l Ioh. 14. 28.

m Ioh. 16. 22.

n Ioh. 8. 59.

A few things I have against you, but my complaint doth spring out of a good root. I humbly request to bee instructed, I love not to contend.

And therefore when occasion serveth, make answer I beseech you.

Also let the godly soul say for her selfe somewhat for her learning.

Likewise make you answer boldly when your part requireth.

O my soule, answer thou thy beloved boldly. For thy friend will patiently heare, and meet thee with milde words that you may suffer none hinderance.

For if hee bee not thy comforter, who will comfort thee? And who more favourably will bear thine infirmity, then hee which beareth all things, and yet is not burdened? And to whom more safely can you reveal your misery, then to him which perfectly knowes all things? Or in whom may you put more confidence, then in the truth which deceiveth not?

o Eccles. 23. 19.

p Ioh. 6. 14.

Now, if any stranger, or one that is not a friend to the spouse, shall hear these things, let him be driven from the doors: but if hee love the

spouse, if hee be faithfull, if devout and spirituall, let him have free ingresse.

If he be a keeper of good conscience, a lover of vertue and discipline; if he be pure in heart, and cleere in judgement; if humble in himself, and good towards others; if hee can neither wickedly carpe, vainly extoll, rashly reprove, impudently maintain, nor proudly commend things; but contrariwise, if he have learned both the things which he conceiveth not, to reverence, and also rightly to interpret obscure and mysticall matters, let him have entrance, and heare the communication. For the affection of the heart, through the sound of words ought to be noted, rather then the quality of voices.

g Mat. 5. 3.

And therefore tell mee, O soule, how dost thou feel thy self, wanting now the grace of thy beloved? I for my part doe see that hardly I can take it well, if he keep himself long away: and I conceive the like of you.

If you think good, let us sit here together, and conferre we hereof to our comfort.

CHAP.

CHAP. 14.

A lamentation of the soule for the want of grace.

My heart breaketh for desire [a].

What is't thou saist? Why saist thou, Zion, the Lord hath forsaken me?

Fear not daughter Zion, thou loving and religious soule: lo thy King, and wel-beloved friend commeth to thee.

Arise, stand up, and behold the joy which commeth toward thee from thy God.

S. I have sought, saith the soule, and have not found [b], I have called, & he hath not answered, and therefore I doe breake for thought.

M. Then said I, this is the voice of the Turtle having lost her mate.

It is not now with you as it was yesterday, and yerwhile, when you sang the songs of myrth.

S. The morning is past, night commeth, and the spouse resteth himself at noon tide: yet may I not come nigh him.

[a] Psal. 87. 20.

[b] Cant. 3. 2.

The fourth booke.

M. Your words are sorrowfull, and your eyes shed teares. O soule, thou art grieved, and hast need of comfort. But speak, whence commeth your grief?

S. I am not troubled either for gold or silver, or any worldly matter, neither for lucre, nor for hurt, neither for injury, nor for poverty, for I am now dead and crucified to the world.

M. If I bee not deceived, long since you renounced the world. But whether in all things perfectly you have denyed the same, and are come even unto a very hatred of your selfe, I would faine know.

S. Very few have that gift, and it is especially looked for at your hands.

M. Why therefore are you so pensive? What have you forgone? If it be for your friend his sake, I must needs confesse you do well to be sad: neither should you take delight in any thing, untill hee returne, and visit you againe.

But in the meane while, how doe you sustaine your selfe upon the beloved, O sweet soule?

And sure I am hee is not alway present

resent at a wish: Therefore while
is absent, what comfort have you?
herein doe you take delight?
Tell me your secrets, be they ne-
er so grievous.

That you beare the absence of
Christ heavily, no man doubteth,
but he onely that loveth not.

Now you are sad, I take it, not for
the world, but for the spouse Christ.
and I know full well that when he
shall returne, you will be merry a-
gaine; because he will not alwaies
forget you. For he hath said, *I will* c Ioh. 14. 18.
not leave you comfortlesse; but I will
come to you.

Therefore your words are not
vain, being uttered with such grief,
but they declare a loving heart, and
unlike the cold affection, which is not
inflamed with the love of Christ.

For your voyce is the voyce of a
Turtle, not the crying of a murmu-
rer. And therefore I trust, you shall
finde him whose losse you so lament.

Notwithstanding, I demand, What
say you of him whose absence you
do so bewaile? is he good or no?

S. Doubtlesse he is good, and sin-
gularly good too d, righteous, and d Mat. 19. 16.
faithfull, in him there is no wic-

e Iob.34.10. kednesse e, neither can bee.

M. Why therefore lament you for

f 1 Pet.2,22. the good, in whom is no deceit f?

S. I weep not for the good, in respect that he is good: but I lament mine owne miserable condition, because I have lost a good and faithfull friend.

I, even I have deserved this: but alas, alas, that I kept not his favour.

By the lack, I have now learned what I have lost. And the absence of a friend, sheweth what his presence did good.

I was merry and jocond with him: but I did no whit consider of his speedy departure.

He came skipping upon the mountains, he was joyfull and jocond in the porches of mine house. And straightway I unlocked the doors of the flesh, and let in the beloved unto me. I did sit, and rested within under his shadow from the haile and raine. And it did mee much good to have his company.

Why should I not rejoyce? He is my joy, and the comfort of mine heart.

Ah, what had I? And what then did I possesse?

I

I am not able to utter how well I prospered then: neither is it convenient that I should. I could not desire more then I had, he being present whom alone I loved.

Oh, how did I love, when I despised both my selfe, and all things beside!

I had either little or no care at all of any thing that might delight me, for I was ravished with love of him, and whatsoever was not my beloved, I loathed as altogether unsavory. But he being taken away, I am in a manner clean out of heart.

For my soule dependeth upon his grace, because I had none other comfort besides him, whose absence I do thus lament. He did content me, and was sufficient to the making of true mirth indeed.

As I would, so was hee, and whatsoever he enjoyned me, I took it in good part, and I consecrated my self wholly and frankly to his will. So that there was a good agreement, and great quietnesse between us.

No man durst be so bold as to interrupt our silence, when hee had commanded so through my mouth.

L. I charge you, O daughters of

2 Cant. 2. 7. Jerusalem ſ, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, that ye ſtir not up, nor waken my Love vntill ſhe pleaſe.

S. Now therefore note, if you be able to conceive my words, what great cauſe I have to lament the abſence of my friend, by whoſe preſence I began to bee ſo rich in all good things.

M. Hereunto I anſwered, I know well what you ſay: by often experience I have proved ſo much as you ſpeake.

But let us comfort our ſelves in this, that the diſpenſation of his will is the increaſe of our zeale and devotion.

And now I have received with thankfulneſſe that which you have uttered: notwithſtanding, I would more throughly have them beaten into mine head. For they which be hard of conceiving, are often to be told of a matter.

CHAP.

CHAP. 15.

1 *Touching the fruit of friendship.*
2 *The benefits of Christ upon man.*
3 *The true felicity and joy of the soule.*
4 *The affinitie between Christ and the soule of man.*

Raised be God which hath not put back my prayer from me[a]. Therefore I am now againe zealously to enquire, if your friend at any time left you without inward comfort.

a Psal. 66. 20.

What mean you? what muse you here about? How also may hee bee reconciled and reclaimed?

Of all friendship, I beseech you, O deare and beloved soule to Christ, conceale none of these things which I am to demand of you.

You may so doe me a pleasure, in opening to mee your godly cogitations.

By your talke I shall bee able to measure the weight of my griefe, whether justly, or without cause I was pensive.

For I have seene you sometime merry,

merry, and sometime sad, and by and by, glad againe, and by you I did somewhat consider of my selfe.

But I suppose the chiefest cause of this your alteration is, that returning and departure of the beloved: The which hath made mee, perceiving how you have run over many matters, for mine instruction to resort unto you.

S. According to your desire, I will bend my selfe somewhat to unfold the things which I feel within mee, both when I am with my friend, and also when I am alone, looking for him whom I so do love.

This first understand, I reap not so much joy and pleasure by his presence, but I finde as much sorrow and bitternesse through his absence.

But why it pleaseth him so to come and go, rather I had he should declare then I.

But you shall hear it when I have finished the words of my song, because in the end we will bring him in unto us: and sitting among us, he shall teach us his order, the which he useth to shew unto such as desire his presence.

In

In the mean while, give attentive eare unto mee, and be not offended at mine homely speech.

For we are now come together to stirre up our hearts, and either to weep together, or through love to rejoyce together.

For woe unto him that is alone[b], because when he falleth into some sorrow or tentation, there is not a second to lift him up. And if two be together, they will comfort one the other; while one being sad, the other ministreth joy; or if he refuse to be comforted, hee shall be pitied forthwith, and griefe will be taken for his griefe; and so it will fall out that either they will both be glad, or both sad together. And although some sorrow doe yet still continue for some adversity, or matter of sorrow; yet the more patiently they beare it, because their hearts be so linked, that nothing can change or alter their mindes.

[b] Eccles. 4. 10.

Now, who seeing this faithful concord of minds, but must needs break into these words, and say[c], *Behold how good and how comely a thing it is, brethren to dwell even together.*

[c] Psal. 133. 1.

And therefore I can the more boldly

boldy tell you what I think, because I dread no deceit, or subtilty in you.

Lo, this all sweet spouse, and best beloved friend, our Lord Jesus Christ, the lover of holy soules, d Wisd. 11, 25. even of pure love, not able otherwise to do, allured me unto him, e Act. 17. 22. when I was not, he gave me life, wisdome and power to behold his common light.

He gave me grace to be borne new by Baptisme, and adorned me with the robe of his precious merits.

Over and besides, when afterward I had foulely bespotted my selfe with sinne, and was far unfit to love him, he cast not his eye on my filthinesse, but upon the side of his mercies.

For when as yet I wandred out of the way, he reclaimed me of his f Rom. 8. 30. goodnesse f, not suffering me to perish in this wicked world.

Moreover, he hath provided me a place to rest in so long as I live in this mortall body.

Notwithstanding, this dwelling under the shadow of the beloved, is not the true rest, nor the rest which shall for ever continue: but that is the

the true rest, which we shall feel after the labours of this present life g. g Rev.21.4.
Yet for the soule to perceive her selfe to bee unburdened of worldly cares, and there to rest where shee may the more fully serve her beloved, and attend upon him in the secret chamber of silence, it is a kinde of comfort.

Furthermore, my friend hath not left, but assisted mee in my divers troubles, and sorest tentations.

Also he hath both instructed me oftentimes with profitable sermons, and confirmed me in his word.

And as young plants are wont to be watered with showers: so he hath watered mee with inward comfort, that the vertue newly implanted within me may not wither.

L. And he said to me, if thou hast a lust unto me, and wilt hearken unto me, thou shalt enjoy good things; if thou wilt do whatsoever I command thee, thou art a friend of mine h. h Ioh.15.14.

If thou wilt chuse mee, and love me above all things, all things that you aske, my father will give you: but if you forgo me, then shalt thou come to destruction, for my wrath shall bee incensed against thee; if thou

thou seekest after another, he shall not please thee long, but thou wilt loath and abhor him. Because I am the salvation and the life of the soule [i].

i Ioh.14.6. Ioh.11.25.

S. So I turned me unto him which had done mee good, and expelling from out my self the dust of earthly affections, I decreed in mine heart from thenceforth to serve him only: because I found nothing better then him, nor could imagine any covenant more profitable.

Let others jet, and seeke what friendship they will elsewhere, I am throughly perswaded this is the true man of the soule, for whose sake me thinks I could gladly forsake this world, to enjoy his love everlastingly.

And therefore I stuck unto him, for he liked me still: neither could I finde a better friend.

For my soule alway hath exceedingly desired such a one, as is the greatest for power, the best for goodnesse, the worthiest for dignity, and the happiest for all good things.

And because he is very courteous, hee gave mee comfortable words,

warily foreseeing that they should neither terrifie, nor breake mee through overmuch roughnesse, but rather enjoyne and teach mee that which should bee both light and sweet to be borne, that so my young affection might the better be drawn on, and the more forcibly addicted to the friend beloved, and not shrink back.

M. She shall the better, said he, be instructed, and profit, if not by force, but through gentlenesse shee be provoked forwards. She will the more easily receive my yoak rather by love with rewards, then by feare with punishment. And if she need impulsion, let it wisely bee used, that violence doe not overthrow her.

For he knew right well what was best for a young plant, and what profit this his kindnes would bring unto me, especially at the time of triall, when I should easily call into my remembrance the good things which at the first hee did unto my soule, and thereby take courage to proceed in the battell.

He would not straightway open unto me, what and how much trou-

ble

ble I was to endure in his service: but sometime he tempered adversity with prosperity, wel considering my weaknesse at the first, until through experience I had gotten strength to endure affliction.

After all this, he carried me about instructed, and bore mee upon his shoulders.

He conducted mee over the holy Scripture, and with the heat of his holy Spirit, hee armed mee against the wicked tentations of Sathan.

Moreover, he placed before mine eyes examples of all the vertues, namely, the holy Patriarkes, and Prophets, besides the glorious light of the new Testament.

Even as a mother teacheth her little childe, so hee instructed mee breaking spirituall shels, & putting the kernels into my jawes, because they were sweet to be eaten.

Search if you can what they signifie, and where such may be found.

Open the Apostolicall book, read advisedly, and see if you are able to comprehend so great mysteries.

Peruse the Prophet *Isaiah*; look into the Gospel, the light of all lights, and mark if they do not yeeld

salt pleasant notes of themselves.
In them whatsoever you finde, which is obscure, and hard to be understood, that is a nut in a shell.
But if you hear it expounded, and understand that which afore you did not, then broken is the shell, and the sweetnes of the nut doth savour in the heart. And so are we to judge of other dark sentences. Whereby you may behold so many nuts as you see hidden sentences.
And how, think you, did he beare me on his shoulders? That he did so often as hee beheld mine infirmities, and yet neither cast mee off, nor despised me, but patiently and mercifully did beare with me [k]. k 2 Pet. 3. 9.
Againe, he did beare mee on his shoulders, when he made other men to beare with mine infirmities, and whatsoever was blame-worthy within mee.
Besides, yet more lovingly he did beare me on his shoulders, when he bare his crosse unto the place, called the place of dead mens sculs [l], where he was crucified. For then was I a more heavie burthen unto him, then the crosse was: And my sinnes were more grievous to his bones [m], then l Ioh. 19. 17, 18.
m 2 Pet. 2. 24.
this

this wood of the crosse to his backe. Because for my sake that crosse was
n Isa.53.5.6. carried [n], not for his own sake.

Oh, how is he above all things to be loved, and to be worshipped, by whose grace and merits I am thus
o Lu.15.4,5,&c. p Gal.3.13. both found out [o], and redeemed [p]! And therefore he shall be as dear to me, as the childe is to his mother.

But well I know, that I am far unmeet to love him: Notwithstanding my boldnesse commeth from his goodnesse. Neither could I doe otherwise but run unto his most friendly embracements, when he shewed himself so kind unto me.

I do well remember what the Prophet David in a certain place doth
q 2 Sam.18.18. say [q]. *What am I? and what is my life, or the family of my father in Israel, that I should be sonne in law to the King?*

But our affinity together is much more excellent then this of David and Saul; Because ours is a pure and sincere kindred, not with flesh and blood, but between God himself, and between faith unviolated, and a good conscience.

Of this did that Disciple whom
r 1 Ioh.4.4. Jesus loved, speake on this wise [r]. *Greater is hee that is in you,*

then

then hee that is in the world,
For God is love [f], and love bring- [f] 1 Ioh. 4. 16.
eth forth this kindred.

Therefore, sith David thought himselfe far unmeet to be sonne in law unto an earthly King, much more abashed ought I to be, to enter into alliance with the King of all kings, that vouchsafeth to allure me, vile wretch, into his friendship.

So that he hath dealt with mee not according to my deserts, but even as it seemeth good in his mercifull eyes.

O blessed and happy art thou, soule, now thou art fast bound with the chaine of the heavenly love.

Oh how noble and free art thou, seeing thou art privie even to the sighing of so holy copulation!

But seeing I have spent many words about the beloved, and yet have not answered fully unto your demand, let us now begin afresh, and God grant that our speech may be both to our comfort and profit.

CHAP.

CHAP. 16.

1 *The more wee love Christ, the more we may.*
2 *Tentation, and when.*
3 *Happinesse of the life to come.*
4 *How to beare affliction.*

BEhold, as the eyes of servants looke unto the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistris a: so mine eyes are fixed continually upon my friend.

a Psal.122.2.

Since first I began to love him, I have had a great desire to continue with him. And this mine intent liked him well, and he allowed the same, saying b, *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*

b Ioh.15.5.

But that the truth, the strength and the purity of my love might appear, it was behovefull that I should be tempted. And so I could not be, unlesse he both suffered the same, and hid himselfe.

And, because tentation serveth both for the purging of the

man [e], and for the fruitfull bringing forth of vertue; and also for the better perceiving the spirituall graces of God, I was tried, and exercised therewithall.

e Psal. 119. 73.

How strongly, and how often hee flang me this way and that way, my God and Lord, which knoweth all secrets [d], and is a witnesse to every vaine cogitation of the heart [e], and will seeth me, and perceiveth how I am nothing else but a fraile creature [f], even he knoweth right well. If therefore he had not assisted me when I was extremely assisted, doubtlesse I had perished [g], being ready to fall into the pit of desperation. But hee whose manner is to comfort the troubled in spirit [h], took mercy upon me.

d Eccles. 23. 19.
e Act. 15. 8.
f Psal. 102. 11.
g Psal. 119. 92.
h Psal. 34. 18.

For if God helped and assisted not, who were able to beare so manifold tentations?

And therefore it was of his great mercy that I stood before the face of such troublesome tempests: and also it is of the same his goodnesse, that still I doe stand and fall not.

But hereof I may not vainly boast, so long as I live in this mortall body.

For

For though I see the elemen
now cleare, yet doe I not think
long it will continue quiet. Fo
wind suddenly will arise, & that
pely when we think least thereof.

So that by so much I perceive,
do need my friend his assistance,
how much I perceive I do lie op
on all sides to troubles.

We shall be quiet no where but
heauen [1], where my friend doth
his elect with joy and exultation

1 Rev. 21. 4.

But when there? What can
speak thereof? Scarce can I thi
any thing thereof; and that not
dently enough, and enter therei
I may not.

Oh that hee would come, and
me in that all-glorious, quiet,
fruitful pasture of his Saints, wh
neither Sathan is, nor danger to
feared.

As yet I toyle in the sea, and w
ther I shall attain unto the po
salvation by reason of my trou
arising through so many contr
windes, I am utterly ignorant.

So that I am altogether ou
quiet. Notwithstanding, it is a
and comfort unto me, that I still
behold the light of faith, that w

all submission, I seek the favour of my beloved, that I bear toward him a constant hope, that I will not bee separated from his love *, and that I doe rest upon his providence, and unsearchable goodnesse, more then upon my selfe.

* Rom. 8. 35.

And therefore, though too too often I doe stagger, yea, and fall too sometime into sinne, yet I am not to despaire, but rather continually to flie unto him, and to cry,

O Lord my God, have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to perish through my manifold tentations, but assist me faithfully, that valiantly I may resist and overcome.

Reach out thy right hand unto the work of thine owne hands †, oh thou which tryest me by Satan, and forcest mee oftentimes on thy left hand.

† Iob 14. 15. Psal. 95. 7.

And if any such tentation shall come, as will stay me from crying unto the Lord, then will I sigh from the bottome of mine heart. For hee knoweth even the very secrets of the heart [m], and is privie to the groanings of the spirit [n]. It is not his will that any one even of the least should perish [o]. Oh how great was

m Psal. 7. 9.
n Rom. 8. 26, 27.
o Mat. 18. 14.

his goodnesse to me-ward, in that
pleased him to be present with
in my trouble, when I did not know
nor could marke so much! For
ten he preserved me from being
terly given over unto my wic
affections.

Through his secret judgemen
came to passe now and then, th
fell, and was foiled even in trifle
that I might not waxe proud
be high-minded for great thing
but learn through humiliation,
I was nothing even then when
seemed to stand upright, and
flourish q.

And therefore I wish you not
ver-rashly, or quickly to comm
mee, though I seeme to prosper
your sight, but reserve all praise
till the good day of my death,
rather praise the Lord, and not

Give the glory unto God
high r, which assisted mee in all
tentations.

For he delivered me of his
many a time, when I was take
mine enemies.

Also when they came as a whi
winde to destroy mee, hee sen
his arrowes, and scattered th

p Psal. 19. 13.

q 1 Cor. 4. 7.

r Psalm. 124.

and he encreased lightnings & appalled them, so that they left me for a time. Because he would not have me to be without that, which from time to time he hath acquainted his Saints withall t. So that I had afterward a little quietnesse and peace by the means of my friend.

t Act.14.22. Psal.34.19.

Whereupon, I did betake me not unto bodily, or worldly, but unto spirituall ease, beholding the earth as far off, and casting my thoughts upon the secrets of heaven u.

u Col.3.11.

I gave diligence to see what manner of person I am, and how I might best please him which had revealed unto me so many tokens of love, far beyond all deserts of mine.

And so much as in me lay, I wished continually for this joyfull peace, the better to cleave unto him, and to serve him the more freely.

But many times the soul hath not her desire; but sometime is is granted, sometime upon good consideration it is deferred.

For who would not wish still to rest under the shade of the beloved, if it might bee granted him, and if time and place were convenient;

The fourth booke

But now my friend worketh wi[illegible] me againe.

I feel not affliction alway, neit[illegible] yet doe I enjoy continuall rest, b[illegible] by an evening and a morning a d[illegible] is made.

For this mortall life is spent [illegible] comming and going both throu[illegible] prosperity and adversity [x].

x Act.14.22.

This was in the mind of th[illegible] Saint, which said [y],

y Iob.7.18.

Thou dost visit him in the morni[illegible] and triest him every moment.

Notwithstanding, it seemeth [illegible] kinde of rest, if the enemy doe [illegible] ther too oft, nor too importunat[illegible] assaile.

And therefore when it shall [illegible] granted me even a little to rest [illegible] selfe sweetly in my beloved, I w[illegible] take it in good part, and rejoyce [illegible] will rejoyce, I say, yea, and alway [illegible] joyce for that grace of God.

Moreover, it maketh me bold [illegible] pray unto him in all my necessit[illegible] because hee hath freely preven[illegible] me so oftentimes with his mer[illegible] visitation.

For when hee doth but approa[illegible] minding to keep holy day with [illegible] even then suddenly there shin[illegible]

light over mine heart, which
thwith driveth out the clouds of
wicked cogitations, whereby I
enjoy the long desired cleerneſſe
God his light.

Becauſe no uncleane nor filthy
ing can ſtand where hee entreth
, for he loveth purity[a], and is the
graffer of the ſame; ſo that of ne-
ſſity all ſatanicall illuſion, toge-
er with the pomps of this world,
uſt be packing.

Therefore my paſſions and tenta-
ons which I did endure, being ſup-
ſſed, I began both the more evi-
ently to know, and the more ear-
ſtly to love, and the more hearti-
to praiſe him, for vouchſafing at
length to beat backe the dam-
d crew of the wicked from aſſai-
ng me.

For they do diſturb my peace, and
n doth ſo ſhut up my mouth, that I
m aſhamed to ſpeak unto my wel-
loved.

ut in vaine doe they bend them-
ves againſt his power and wiſe-
me, becauſe even in a moment he
n ſlide down into mine heart, and
ure in ſecretly good motions, that
ay both contemne, and utterly

[a] Rev. 21. 27.
[a] Mat. 5. 8.

neglect all their privie whiſperings.

Oh my faithfull, and all loving friend, take me ſo unto thee, whatſoever thou ſhalt perceive mine affections to be either preſſed down at any time with the weight of ſin, or to be held with unneceſſary buſineſſe, that I may not wander farre, or ſtray from thee after the ſwarme of wicked cogitations, and ſo overeaſily be deprived of thy grace, without which I ſhall not be able to enjoy thy friendſhip.

For thou art my Lord, and my God [b], which by thy word doſt both heale and ſanctifie; which holdeſt my ſoule in life [c], and ſuffereſt not my feet to ſlip, but deliverеſt me from the evill day, and from the ſnares of death.

b Mat. 4. 10.

c Pſal. 66. 9.

Oh, how many haue been caſt off and utterly periſhed that have been much more innocent then I am!

And therefore, my ſoule, praiſe thou the Lord, and all that is within me bleſſe his holy Name [d].

d Pſal. 103. 1, 2.

My ſoule, I ſay, praiſe thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefits.

It is all too little, and far unſufficient whatſoever thou ſhalt either thinke

thinke, or speake, or promise to his praise. For he exceedeth all praise, and is much sweeter then any musick.

Wherefore my soule cleaveth to thee alone, and loveth thee above all other gifts, notwithstanding it be exceedingly beautifull and sweet which of meere good will thou hast sent unto me.

For thou alone art the spouse[e]; as for all things else, they are gifts and arguments of love. [e] Mat. 9. 15.

In stead of thee I will not love them; neither will I beleeve that any thing, or all things in the world can suffice me, if I have not thee; for in so doing, I may perchance forgoe thee with them too.

Thou giveſt me leave to use many things for thy sake; but I may not enjoy so much as one thing in thy stead[f]. [f] Exod. 20. 3.

And therefore, O Christ my sweet Spouse, I have preferred thee afore all other things, and my care hath been above all things to love thee.

Wherefore grant that blessedly I may enjoy thee, and in that union everlastingly to triumph in happinesse together with thee.

But how farre am I come? I have lengthened my speech more then perhaps you would. But pardon me, good friend. For I have been carried aloft through the love of my speciall and only friend; and would to God it would please him still to lift up both me and you too in contemplation.

Let him provide an heavenly accension, but let us not keep a base going downe.

M. Ask you me, whether I am forsaken at any time of my beloved?

S. Yea, I say so.

M. But how do you behave your selfe in trouble?

S. I take all things as patiently as I can, expecting his comming.

Naturally I am grieved: but as touching my spirit, I have inward patience; that my griefe prove not incurable. For I forget not, how he that loveth liveth in paine.

I live by faith [g]; I beleeve the holy Scriptures; I give credit to the words of comfort. And although I endure affliction; yet I doubt not, neither indeed ought I to doubt, but that God (when it pleaseth him) can send me ease.

g Rom. 1. 17.

For

For true, and to bee credited are those words which are declared. Because the very Saints themselves have been exercised in many, and proved in like things [h].

Nature continually doth wish for quietnesse, and seeketh to bee comforted in some thing: but the spirit notwithstanding is ready to sustain whatsoever the will of God is I should endure [i].

If therefore I shall be lesse zealous, and lesse willing to do good, my punishment shall be the more grievous. *Though he slay me*, saith the wise man, *yet will I trust in him* [k].

If I love vertues, patience is a great vertue: therefore let patience evermore be retained. For the more praise we purchase, the more paines we take in bringing things to passe.

And that our vertue may be proved, and made the more glorious, we are commonly exercised by contrary events.

Therefore whensoever any such tryall shall happen, bee not out of heart, neither fall down; but retain thou patience, and extoll the righteousnesse of God. The Lord is not so hard and pitilesse, that he can suffer

h Heb. 11. 4, 5, 6.

i Mat. 14. 38.

k Iob 13, 15.

you to abide long uncomforted.

Onely have a care, that you neither lament immoderately, nor yet murmure against the righteous and just God, because you are forsaken [l], lest the wicked spirit do send unto you more grievous tentations of your faith, whereby being overfearfull, you shall extremely be afflicted.

l 2 Co. 12. 10.

Wherefore beare a little, and suppresse your sorrow, although the griefe both of your heart and body be never so great.

Abide constant in that good purpose, which at the first you intended to keep. For it is good, especially at such an extremity, to cast all confidence upon the beloved.

Look thou patiently for God his heavenly comfort, so shall you speedily perceive a speciall favour and sight of God.

Lo, you have a faithfull witnesse, saying [m], *I waited patiently for the Lord, and hee inclined unto mee, and heard my cry.*

m Psal. 40. 1.

And that in your need you may finde the like favour, I doe wish you both earnestly to pray your selfe, and desire others to pray for you also,

also, and so commit your self wholly to his will and ordinance, that hee may deale with you even as it shall please him; and say to him with a good conscience: In thine hands are my works, thou knowest how it goeth with me; thou knowest what I suffer: and now if it be thy will, I shall speedily be comforted.

Notwithstanding, let that be done which seemeth right and good in thine eyes, and have mercy on me, a desolate and miserable wretch, pitiously complaining unto thee.

If therefore thou continue in patience and long-suffering, and for a little trouble, swerve not from the faith and love in Jesus Christ, assure your self the brightnesse of God his favour will returne, and illuminate thee most gloriously with his beams of spirituall comfort. And so the beloved at his returne shall bee more dear unto thee, then if he had never been absent.

For the sentence of God his displeasure is not past calling backe; neither is he so offended, that hee may not be reconciled againe.

Doubtlesse he will speedily, and easily bee at one with thee, if thou

give diligence, and promise afterward both to be more carefull that you sinne not, and earnest to leade a vertuous life.

If thou wilt yeeld to these wholesome admonitions, doubt you not, thy beloved will bee with you as afore, and at his presence you will receive much comfort, saying [n]:

n Psal. 31. 19.

How great is thy goodnesse, which thou hast laid up for them that feare thee! which thou hast done for them which trust in thee! under the shadow of thy wings thou wilt protect them.

O Zion, thou shalt be renued, and see thy King which is to reigne in thee.

Thy beloved is the King of power [o], whose hinder parts are in the paleneſſe of gold, but his head is pure gold.

o Dan. 2. 37.

Thus much may suffice to be said for your comfort.

As for other things concerning the change of the beloved, namely, how hee appeareth sometime, and sometime runneth to and fro, in the next discourse you shall receive, and heare them even from his owne mouth.

CHAP.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 17.

1. *The majestie and omnipotencie of God.*
2. *How, and why the Lord afflicteth his children.*

MArvellous are thy works, and my soule knoweth it right well [a].

a Psal. 139. 14.

How is it, O my beloved, that I am thus dealt withall? Why hast thou forsaken me? Answer I beseech thee.

Thou didst leave me, and wentest, and camest againe, And herein thou didst well; for hadst thou not made a speedy return, I had fainted well-nigh: but thou tookest compassion upon me, being privie to all my secrets.

For through your departure I was very sad: and now for your return I am glad againe.

Notwithstanding, for my learning sake, tell, what good meaning had you therein? What availeth it you so to leave, and afflict me?

Take you pleasure in hearing? *Tarry with us, for it is towards night* [b].

b Luk. 24. 29.

O come and sit among us; for lo, I and another disciple are very desirous to heare you speake, and we heartily pray you to instruct us.

Speak boldly what it shall please you, and if you think good, turne your speech unto me. I doe heare none with such pleasure as I do you. And whosoever else doth speak, his speech is gratefull, and well listned unto of me, for your sake that speak within him. And therefore your speech shall be to mee more sweet then either the honey or the honey-combe: For they passe in sweetnesse all other words.

Let now your voyce sound in mine eares.

So then the voyce of the beloved thundred and said:

I. I am the Lord which speak righteousnesse [c], And who is like me in counsell and wisdome?

c Esa. 45. 19.

Who made the sea, and the dry land? I the Lord, forming the light, and creating the darknesse [d].

d Esa. 45. 7. 8.

Who hath entered into the sea, and brought forth waters out of the deep? Even I, the Lord, which search the hearts and the reines [e].

e Psal. 7. 9.

Who hath known all things past, and

and is privie to the things to come? Even I, the Lord, which have done all things in measure, number and weight [f].

f Wis. 11. 21.

I am the Creatour both of heaven and earth [g], the ruler of this world [h], the knower of hidden things [i], the revealer of secrets [k], the possessor of the whole world [l], and the beholder of the causes of all particulars.

g Esa. 42. 5.
h 2 Tim. 1. 17.
i Rev. 3. 15.
Eccles. 42. 20.
k Mat. 10. 26.
l Psal. 50. 12.

I am God, and change not [m], who have continually with me the causes of all changes in the world.

m Mal. 3. 6.

I am God the Almighty [n], whose power is invincible [o]; I am God the most High [p], whose highnesse cannot bee attained [q]: I am God the most Righteous [r], whose being cannot be conceived [s].

n Gen. 35. 11. Rev. 4. 8.
Rev. 11. 17.
o Rom. 5. 19.
p Esa. 14. 24.
q Psa. 139. 7, 8, &c.
r Mat. 19. 17.
s Iob 11. 7, 8. &c.

I am for my presence every where [t], and yet no where to be seen [u].

t Psa. 139. 7, 8, 9.
u Iob 23. 8, 9.

I am the most spirituall, and farthest from the senses of man [x].

x Ioh. 1. 18.

I beare all things, yet never burdened [y], and I fill and rule each place, and yet unstretched.

y Heb. 1. 3.

I behold both things past, and things to come alike, as though they were present [z].

z Wisd. 8. 8. Eccl. 42. 19.

I surpasse all creatures both spiri-

O come and sit among us; for I, I and another disciple are very desirous to heare you speake, and we heartily pray you to instruct us.

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e Psal. 7. 9.

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y Heb. 1. 3.

I behold both things past, and things to come alike, as though they were present [z].

z Wisd. 8. 8. Eccl. 42. 19.

I surpasse all creatures both spiri-

spirituall and corporall a.

a Psal.35.10.

I am diversly to be named; yet no thought is able to conceive mee as I am.

I shew my selfe suddenly, and forthwith when one would little think, I am gone againe.

I am indeed the invisible God b, which after a thousand waies declare my presence to my friends.

b 1 Tim.6.16.

And thus I spake unto the loving soule.

I will hide my face for a little season, I will forsake her for a while, to see if her love be pure and unfained.

It is a great matter to love unfainedly. For that is to love me neither for her owne sake, nor for any temporal commodity, or spirituall comfort; but to love me, and me only, and that for mine owne sake, and that to the end, and that in hope of nothing at mine hands.

c Mat.4.10.

It is not in every one thus to love me; but this prerogative of pure loving, is proper only to the perfect soule.

But she that is yet unperfect, hath great need often to be proved, and exercised, that shee may know both how

how much she loveth me, and how greatly she despiseth her selfe.

For you said in your heart, Truly I do love Christ, yea, and often you repeat the same thing, I love him indeed.

But I credit not words or thoughts onely: For I will make due tryall of that love.

When I am present, and speake faire; when I either put, or increase good motions in the minde; when I grant prosperity most commonly or pleasure, then can you say with all devoutnes, *O my beloved, I do love you.* And you say well. For I am greatly to be loved, and you are at no time either to think or speake otherwise then friendly and honourably of me.

But for prosperity and good turns only to love and to commend mee, what great thing is it? because even sinners doe the same. For when they have received what naughtily they craved, they oftentimes blesse mee for the same. But praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner [d]. d Eccles. 15. 9.

He therfore which either for some profit, or comfort received, doth love me, doth no more then a covetous

tous man doth. But exceede him, I ſay, exceed him, and proceed unto greater righteouſneſſe.

Be aſhamed ſtill to be weake and tender; learne to eate mans meat, bee not ſtill fed with the milke of children.

Attaine thou to the companie of the ſtout Davids, that can hold both ſpeare, and ſword and ſhield.

Take up the croſſe and follow me[c].

[c] Luk. 9. 23.

Make haſte to be in the number of them which have learned to bear divers afflictions, and much baniſhment for my name ſake. You are too much given unto eaſe.

I purpoſe to try you, and to turn unto the other ſide, that you may know what you can ſuffer, leſt you ſeeme over-innocent and holy in your owne conceit.

Tribulation, and anger, and mine heavie diſpleaſure, together with ſore tentations of wicked ſpirits ſhall come upon you. Some unjuſtly ſhall ſpoile you of your goods, others ſhall take no compaſſion upon you, others ſhal defame, others ſhall reſiſt, others ſhall overcharge, others ſhall carry you perforce whi-

ther

ther you would not goe; some outwardly, others inwardly, shall trouble you: Some shall be advanced unto high degree and honour, but you shall be left unto reproaches, and endure servile pains. In all these, yea, and in greater things, you shall bee proved, whether you are a valiant souldier of mine, or no.

I will depart, and not give over, untill I have made sufficient tryall, whether you blesse me to my face.

Now if I finde, that from the heart unfainedly you do love mee, and continually doe praise my Name, then is it meet that from henceforth I call you Spouse, and that you shall have a secret chamber with me.

But if I perceive that you cannot beare my correction, but will judge my punishment to bee over-sharp, and still bewail mine absence, wishing for me with hearty and earnest desire; I will send you my staffe, that you may arise thereby, and afterward my selfe will come and restore you again unto my wonted favour. For it is not my will that you should utterly faint; because him that

that loveth mee, I will love to the
f Ioh. 13. 1. end f.

And although your love be not so perfect as could be wished; yet I will not despise you, but provide that you may grow on in loving. For my care is that you do well; and therefore mistrust me not.

I know what you can endure: which maketh mee to temper my course, that you be not tempted above your strength, and so faint.

And if I stay, in your opinion, somewhat too long, look for me untill the day of my visitation. For comming, I will come, and perform my promise.

Be you still in prayer, still meditating upon the holy Scripture, and alway be patient, and suffer.

I am not ignorant but your grief will be much: but so quickly to be overthrowne, and to bee out of all hope of my returne, I cannot like that.

Where is your faith? A great faith you had neede of, especially on this behalfe: for although you see not
g Eccles. 23. 19. me, yet are you seen of me g, into whose hands you are to commend both your self & all that you have.

For

For although you are not privie to my judgements: yet having a strong faith, you must of necessity say [h], *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgements.*

h Ps.119.137

So then bee of good comfort, for this affliction is not to your destruction, but for the glory of God.

I denyed your petition, because I would have due proof of your faith and love.

For, all this I did that you should well understand both your owne weaknesse, and my goodnesse [i].

i Ps.119.67,71.

I know what you are [k], better then your selfe doth. Yea, I have knowne you throughly, not of late, but from everlasting [l].

k Psal.7.9.

l Wisd.8.8.

Wherefore acknowledge the benefit which you have by me; behold how miserable you should bee, if once I forsake you.

As yet you have not profited sufficiently in the knowledge of your self. And because it is very expedient that you have that knowledge, my will was that by experience you should attaine there unto.

It is very good for you to be forsaken, to be troubled, to be humbled sometime, that so the better you may

may even sensibly perceive your owne weakenesse [m].

m Psal. 119. 71.

I know right well this will make you a good disciple of mine. And what I pray you, have you lost, if hereby you prove more wise and watchfull?

Oftentimes you are too arrogant, and forgetfull of your self, thinking that goodnesse to bee within you which is not; self-love doth deceive you, and while you think not of the giver, you doe abuse the gift. I made you drunk; but you forgot how the grape did grow upon mine owne vine.

Try your self a little, acknowledge your strength. If that which you had came of your selfe, why did you not hold it? But if you could not hold it, confesse that you received it from above [n]. And therefore ascribe all the honour to the mercy of God, and openly confesse, how without me you can do nothing [o].

n 1 Cor. 4. 7. Iam. 1. 17.

o Ioh. 15. 5.

Consider both in what state I stand you, and how able also I am to confirme you in all goodnesse.

Where were you before I called you, but weltring in sin and wickednesse? And now, how would you

wander, if I directed you not? Yea, and when also went it wel with you; if you had not my favour?

S. And I said, At no time, sweet Lord. Thou alone art my singular good friend, in all things, and above all most faithfull.

I. Why then did you purpose so wickedly with your selfe to go after strange lovers? What misliked you in me? was it either my majesty or my beauty?

S. Ah Lord, there is none comparable to thee, either for beauty, or for glory, or for riches, or for authority; neither in heaven nor in earth is any like unto thee p. For thou only art most high over all creatures.

The heavens are thine q, the earth also is thine; thou hast laid the foundation of the world, and all that therein is.

Much is it that thou hast imparted upon thy creatures, by which, thy beauty, wisdome & goodnesse doth appeare r: but yet in comparison of thy blessed and glorious presence, it is nothing. So that by experience I have learned now, that I cannot lack thy company one houre together, but with much griefe to my soul.

p 1 King. 8. 23.

q Psal. 89. 11.

r Rom. 1. 20.

Re-

L. Returne therefore unto me, thou hast hitherto wandred enough about.

Let not henceforth to bee more ſtayed, and milde, and faithfull, and to truſt in me, not only in the day of my gracious viſitation, but much more in the night of tentation.

I have let you ſlip, that being wearied, you might return unto me more ſpeedily, and being fruſtrate of outward comfort, at length underſtand how much you are bound unto mee, that ſo often have called unto you.

And therefore liſten now at the laſt, for it is not without cauſe that ſometime you are forſaken, that you are cold ſometime in zeale, that it irketh you, that you are overwearied with tentations, that on all ſides you are afflicted, that you can neither finde any counſell, nor ſome comfort, but are enforced to endure anguiſh and miſery at all times, and in all places.

I am abſent, to the end you may know how needfull it is that I be preſent with you, not onely in one matter, or in a ſpeciall cauſe, but in

every action in all places and times so well early as late, wheresoever you shall become, goe or stand. For this will teach you to walke warily with your friend, to abstain from vanities, and to take heed of offences [f].

f Mic. 6. 8.

I doe leave you, that you may well understand how much you are bound to love me, that is, that you may see a manner how to love mee indeed.

It is very true, you thought your selfe more stout, and happy, then in truth you were: but when I did once withdraw mine aid from you a little, it then appeared to the world how you were very poor and miserable [t].

t Rev. 3. 17.

How shall your love be knowne, unlesse you beare my yoak with patience?

Sometime, I see you to wax sluggish, and therefore I doe hide my self for an houre, like a friend standing behinde the wall [u], that you may be stirred up the more zealously to seek me.

u Cant. 2. 9.

I know for my part, and see all things [x]: but troublous trials (which are good for many causes) do make

x Eccles. 42. 19, 20.

you the more heedie and wise in all
y Ih.23.19. your actions y.

Moreover, if you love mee, you will not waxe the more sluggish in seeking me for all this; if you like me, you will seek me.

What? Wot you not, how riches painfully come by, are kept most carefully? who so wisheth rest, as the wearied man? who loveth so kindly as he which hath sighed most heavily? and is not that jewell which was lost, and is found again, much more
z Luk.15.19. esteemed then before it was z? even so is the joy double, and the myrth doubled at the long wished presence of the beloved.

And therefore it is much for your profit that I withdraw my selfe; because I doe it, not for any ill will to you-wards, but upon very good cause: so do I dally with my friends.

Let it suffice you at this time, that you have been in my favour to heare so much at my mouth.

Besides, when you have need returne unto me, and feare not. For I never shut mine eares against that
a Mat.7.7.8. person which humbly and earnestly cryeth for mine assistance a.

CHAP.

CHAP. 18.

1. *The confidence of a true Christian.*
2. *God justifieth the ungodly.*
3. *Giveth whatsoever good is to man.*
4. *Will have no man to despaire.*
5. *But that all sinners should flie unto his mercy.*

MY Lord God will helpe me, therefore shall I not be confounded [a]. a Isa.50.7.

S. Let it grieve no body, though I love much to speake with my Lord God, whose goodnesse hath allured and enflamed mee both to pray and to meditate in such sort, that me thinks I should be too hard and unkind, if I made none answer unto his words.

But haply some one will say against me, Therefore neither do you feare God, seeing you are a foule sinner, unworthy even to live in this world.

Whence is it that you dare so presume in your heart? And being the vilest and vilest of all others, with what face can you thrust forth your self so to talk with your Lord God? Eccles.15.9. Ioh.9.13.

Whom do you make your selfe?

Oh my loving Lord, doe thou answer on my behalfe. For the mouth
b Psal.109.2. of the wicked is opened upon me b.

If I would justifie my selfe, mine
c Iob.9.20. owne mouth shall condemne mee c.
And though I were cleane; yet did
not my soule know so much.

Oh Lord, thou knowest my folly,
and my shamefastnesse. Speak thou
on my behalfe, and I full gladly will
keep silence.

L. Give thou none heed to the
words of the wicked: but rather
thou remember how I have said,
came not to call the righteous, but
d Mat.2.17. *sinners to repentance* d.

e Mat.28.17. Am not I to doe what I will?
Mar.17.2. Who may resist my pleasure?
Heb.2.8.

If I think it good to shew favour
to thee-ward, though little thou de-
serve the same at mine hands, who
f Rom.8.33,34. shall reprove me therefore f?

He that is without sinne, let him
g Ioh.8.7. throw the first stone at thee g. But
if they, all the pack of them, are sin-
ners, with what face can they find
fault with my favour to thee-ward?

h Ioh.15.16. You have not chosen mee h, but
my mercy did prevent you.

Dareth any yet murmure a-

you for comming unto mee? Comfort thy selfe, his murmure is not against thee, but flatly against my person, because it is I that receive [i], and eat with sinners [k]. And why ought you not to challenge mine acquaintance, the which I rejoyce to offer, rather then to withdraw from any one?

[i] 1 Tim. 1. 15.
[k] Mat. 9. 11, 12, 13.

3. O gracious Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, but to me, and to my sins.

I cannot deny, but deservedly they conceive ill of me; yea, I doe openly acknowledge this withall, that I am much more wicked then any man doth know.

2. You doe well thus to humble your selfe. For in so doing, you shall ever gaine, and more easily obtaine my favour.

Notwithstanding, I will not therefore cast you away, because you are a sinner and faultie, albeit that should make you both to think basely of your selfe, and alway to have a mind what great sinnes you are polluted withall. But that you perish not through desperation, consider how many righteous men I have made of sinners [l], friends of e-

[l] Mat. 1. 17. Luke 15. 1.

nemies, chuſing the humble, and refuſing the proud [m].

I have no need of any gift of thine [n]: only this I require at your hands, namely, that you love me with a pure heart [o], and I am ſatisfied.

S. I am clean daſhed: for alas, there is nought within me to ſtir up your love thus to me-ward.

L. I do neither reſpect nor require the things that this world doth offer to get favour withall; if you do love, and that your love be fervent and conſtant, it is all that I aske.

But, I pray thee, whoſe are the things that doe, or may adorne a man? are not all things mine, whatſoever do glitter either in the body or minde [p]?

As for that of the world, and which ſet out the body, they ought little to trouble your minde. But thinges which belong to the beautifying of vertue, it ſtandeth you upon to ſeeke, that you may please the Lord in the light of the living.

Howbeit, you have well done in humbling and accuſing your ſelf, ſo well outwardly as inwardly, before

m Luk. 1.52, 53. &c. Luk. 18.14. Iam. 4.6.
n Pſal. 50.12, 13.
o Mat. 22.37.
p Iam. 1.17. 1. Cor. 4.7.

the face of my maiesty, by confessing unfainedly your great weakenesse, and wickednesse, and by fetching deep sighs, for that you are very unworthy to challenge the favour of my familiaritie even but one houre, being, as I am, a glasse pure without spot [q], and you are a great sinner, and uncleane even from your infancie [r].

[q] Wis. 7. 26.
[r] Gen. 8. 21.

And therefore be ever mindefull both of your fraile condition, and of my glorious Majesty, and so with humble reverence approach boldly into my presence. For I am he that putteth away thine iniquities, and will not remember thy sins [s]; it is I that justifie the ungodly [t]: and this I do for mine holy Name sake; yea, and I am still ready to minister greater gifts of mercy unto thee.

[s] Isa. 43. 25.
[t] Rom. 4. 5.

Because I doe ever chuse to shew favour rather then displeasure, as one who had rather spare then punish.

Yea, all this seemeth but little in mine eyes, nor am I so content with the first grace that I will not adde a second or a third rather, yea, in very deed, as I can set none end to my mercies [u]: so neither can the

[u] Psal. 145. 9.

number of my gifts and benefits be recited x.

x Pſal. 68. 19.

Laſt of all, after that I for my part have pardoned ſinnes, and men for their parts by their goodneſſe have teſtified to the world their unfained repentance, then doe I reſtore for the moſt part the comfort of mine healthfull countenance, bepouring in moſt plentifull manner the grace of mine holy ſpirit. And although a ſinner do abide ſtill in the fleſh; yet do I receive him into my familiarity, ſo that he is not to fear the utter confuſion for ſins committed: but rather to thank and praiſe God, that old things be paſſed away, and that all things are become new y.

y 2 Cor. 5. 17.

So gracious and mercifull am I, that alwaies I am more ready to forgive, then thou art to beg forgiveneſſe at mine hands; more ready to give, then thou art to aske.

Therefore why feare you? What diſmaieth you to approach unto the ſide of ſuch favours? And why doe you eſtrange your ſelfe from ſo great kindneſſe offered unto you ſo frankly of mine owne accord?

Doubtleſſe, though you did certainly underſtand that I were pur-

poſed

poſed to give you the denyall: yet ought you not to deſiſt from praier, nor yet to be out of all hope of being heard; but ſo much the more earneſtly to be inſtant in crying, untill you were heard. For my mercies are infinite, and what I deny at one time, may be granted favourably at another.

How know you whether I will turn my face unto you, and grant you the deſire of your heart?

And what ſaith the Prophet concerning me? Approach unto him, and be illightened, ſo ſhall not your faces be confounded.

Wherefore accuſe your ſlow comming unto me, rather then your often approaching; and rather your fearfull ſhameſaſtneſſe, then your prompt preſuming of forgiveneſſe.

To hope well of my goodneſſe, is a very token of true humility, and of a great faith.

This doe I ſpeak, that you may not offend; and that when you doe offend, you deſpaire not, but riſe againe with ſpeed: for yet you have hope, and an Advocate with the Father [2].

[2] 1 Joh. 2. 1.

What? Look you to bee all wor-

thie before you make acceſſe unto mee? And of your ſelfe when will you be ſo?

If only ſuch as are good, and worthy, and great, and perfect, ſhould approach unto me, to whom ſhould ſinners and publicans approach?

So then what ſaith the Goſpel? *There reſorted unto him publicans and ſinners to heare him*[a]. Therefore let the unworthy approach, that they may become worthy; let the wicked approach, that they may bee made good; let the weake and unperfect approach, that they may prove ſtrong and perfect: yea let all and every one approach, that they may receive from the abundant ſtreames of the well of life[b]. I am the well of life that cannot be drawne dry.

a Luk. 15. 1.

b Ioh. 4. 14.

He which is a thirſt, let him come unto me and drink[c]. And he which hath nothing, let him come and buy without ſilver, and without mony[d].

c Ioh. 7. 37.

d Iſa. 55. 1.

He that is ſick, let him come to be healed[e]. He that is neither hot nor cold, let him come to be inflamed[f].

e Mat. 9. 12.

f Mar. 9. 24.

He that is fearfull, let him come to be encouraged: he that is ſorrowfull, let him come to be comforted.

He

He that is withered, let him come to be fatted; he that is wearied with cares, let him come to be refreshed with joy. Lo, my delight is to be with the children of men [g].

[g] Rom. 8. 31.

Hee that desireth wisdome, let him come unto my lessons [h].

[h] Ps. 119. 9, 14.

Hee that seeketh riches, let him come to receive those which are eternall and incorruptible [i].

[i] Mat. 6. 19, 20.

Hee that hunteth for honour, let him come to get an everlasting name in the inheritance of heaven; he that wisheth for felicity, let him come, and hee shall taste the soveraigne, eternall and infinite happinesse [k].

[k] 1 Cor. 2. 9.

I, even I it is which giveth all temporall good things [l], yea, and besides that, I give eternall riches in the heavens [m]. And what I promise, I will performe, at such time as my commandements are duly observed. And he then shall be crowned gloriously in heaven that hath fought courageously in this world [n].

[l] Iam. 1. 7.

[m] Rom. 6. 23.

[n] 2 Tim. 2. 5, 12.

CHAP.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 19.

1. *The desire of a Christian soule is never satisfied till God be enjoyed.*
2. *No comfort any whit comparable to the spirituall joy.*

LEt the meditation of mine heart bee acceptable in thy sight [a].

a Psal. 19. 14.

What can bee more comfortable? What more joyfull to the faithfull soule, then still devoutly to meditate upon her Lord God, that whom shee cannot as yet behold in a cleer and blessed sight, at the least she may, as it were, make him present by earnest calling him into mind? Therefore let her behold him as in a glasse darkly [b], whom she is not to see face unto face.

b 1 Cor. 13. 13.

And albeit she may not have a full sight of him in his majestie: yet let her search for her by types in the Scriptures.

Oh, that the care to seek the face of the Lord, did never waxe cold within me, but daily more and more encreased!

Howbeit, the soule that loveth God,

God, hath a wonderfull deſire to enjoy the ſight of God. For to ſee him is happineſſe indeed, and the abſolute felicitie. Rev.22.4.

Wherefore ſhe deſireth this bleſſednesſe, that her whole appetite, having attained her end, ſhee may bee ſatisfied, and at quiet: for nothing in the world is able to content her [d]. d Eccles.1.8.

For long experience hath taught her, that the more ſhe ſtrayeth from celeſtiall happineſſe, the more unhappy and unquiet ſhe is, inaſmuch as in this world nothing is permanent or durable [e], that may aſſwage the heat of her affection. e 1 Cor.7.31. 1 Ioh.2.15, 16, 17.

So then, let her make return unto him that made her [f], and let her deſire to be bleſſed of him, who at the firſt created her. For doubtleſſe, he that made the ſoule, muſt ſatisfie the ſoule with good things [g], Becauſe, ſuch a deſire hath he inſtilled into her, that hee being gone, nothing will content her; nor any joy comfort her greatly. f Gen.1.26,27. Wiſd.2.23. g Pſal.103.5.

And therefore ſoul of mine, ſtand not here ſtill, for this is no place of reſt for thee: but mount aloft, aſcend unto him that made thee. For hee

hee hath now ſent his meſſengers, and biddeth thee to aſcend.

So many deſires of eternall life as hee inſpireth, ſo many meſſengers hee doth ſend. Which being entertained, prepare thy ſelf to the journey.

Then goeſt thou on, when thou deſireſt to ſee him, when thou laboureſt to pleaſe him, when thou renounceſt this world, when thou doſt whatſoever thou doſt, even of pure love to him-ward.

For had he not firſt ſought thee, and poured holy cogitations into thy breſt, thou couldſt never ſeek him [h].

h Ioh. 6. 44.

For that ſoule doth languiſh, not for love, but through wearineſſe, which is not enlightened with the beams of the eternall Sunne [i].

i Ioh. 1. 5.

But, if through the ſweet blaſts of the Southern winde, her frozen coldneſſe, and ſorrow be once reſolved, then by reaſon of the light inſpired, and incomprehenſible divinitie, ſhee beginneth to ſweate through the hotneſſe of love.

Oh infinite heate of the true Sunne! what boylings doeſt thou cauſe then within the heart of the lover?

lover? Thou diſſolveſt the darkneſſe of a ſorrowfull minde, and bringeſt the labourſome toile unto nothing. The long time and dayes of poverty thou doeſt comfort, and that abundantly, with one ſimple beame of thy glorious light.

O ſalve of the ſorrowfull [k]! O ſhining light of ſuch as wander and ſeek! Shine thou continually upon me; prepare thou a manſion place within mee, even till thine everlaſting light doth apeare. [k] Mat. 9. 12.

O how ſweet, and how comfortable wil thy preſence be; ſeeing even of a little remembrance ſo unſpeakable joy doth ariſe!

How gladly can I turn unto thee! how frankely doe I renounce even this world, that I may be comforted with thy heavenly favour!

For it will bee no hard matter for the ſoule which longeth for the ſight of thy countenance, to bereave her ſelfe of all outward pleaſure, when ſhee ſhall either feele now a greater in the minde, or very ſhortly expect with a perfect faith for the ſame.

Furthermore, none is to be ſo fooliſh as to think, that thou wilt have the

the devout ſoule any long while uncomforted; or that the gifts of thy favour which ſhe is to receive for all her conqueſts over nature, ſhall be ſmall: for no earthly comfort, whatſoever it be, or whenceſoever it ariſe, is any whit comparable, either in the quality or quantity of ſweetneſſe to the heavenly joy.

And therefore labour thou, O faithfull ſoule, to ſhew thy ſelf ſuch toward thine heavenly Spouſe, Chriſt, that he may continually be gracious and favourable unto thee, for through him, and in him you ſhall in moſt abundant manner find that, which exceedingly ſhall minifter comfort unto you in all extremities.

The oftner you have acceſſe unto him, & the nigher you do approach unto his ſide, the ſweeter he will appear, and the more amiable in your eyes. But if you withdraw your ſelf, then the loſſe will be your own, and he abiding in his beauty, ſhall feele neither griefe nor trouble.

You ſtand in need of his, but he of no mans goodneſſe.

So that you may become bleſſed through him, but ſo cannot be-

ee by your proceeding.
He alone ſuffereth himſelfe; hee
lone can neither bee augmented,
or diminiſhed.
Through his goodneſſe all things
re, whatſoever bee, whether they
ave life, ſenſe or underſtanding l. l Act.17.28.
And therefore juſt it is that all
reatures everlaſtingly ſhould bleſs
im m. m Pſal.150.6.
Oh how gladly would I diſcourſe
nd ſpeake of him unto thee, if I
ere able ſufficiently ſo to doe!
But what? he neither is, nor may
e uttered. Againe, as he cannot be
uttered by means, ſo can he not bee
conceived in minde.
Which being ſo, thinke notwith-
ſtanding of thy Creator ſo well as
man may, taking the remembrance
of his abundant ſweetneſſe for a
comfort, untill ſuch time as hee re-
vealeth the ſight of his owne coun-
tenance unto thee in the heavens n. n Rev.22.4.

CHAP.

CHAP. 20.

1. *A complaint of the soule for the want of her blessed state.*
2. *What weeping pleaseth God.*
3. *Who truly blessed.*
4. *A description of God.*

a Psal. 31. 22.

I Said in mine heart, I am cast out of thy sight a. Mine heart is wounded within mee through the long deferring of thy glory.

I will speak therefore, and reason with my grieved soule. The great zeale of love compelleth mee to speake, and suffereth nothing to be concealed from thee. What then shall I say? Lo, my God, in peace is my most bitter bitternesse.

Hee that is ignorant worketh not the meaning hereof. But it is not so with me: I know, and I understand it, and therefore I am not ashamed to sing with the Prophet.

b Psal. 38. 15. Rev. 3. 15. Ecclus. 42. 20.

I speake to thee, my Lord b, who knowest all things, and givest both knowledge and understanding according to thy good pleasure, that neither I may glory more then is meete

neere I ſhould, nor the foole advance mee, when in truth I am ſimple.

I may confeſſe then what I have received from thee. And yet what neede have I to tell you thereof, when as you are neither ignorant, nor can take any pleaſure of the ſame?

Againe, what comfort can come unto you, which are the comfort of the comfortleſſe?

So that the profit is mine, which doe lack the conſolation of words, thereby to ſtir up mine affection to thee-ward, and to find ſome eaſe for my deſolate ſoule. For, ſeeing I may not behold thy preſence, I will bewaile thine abſence, becauſe even this is a token of love, and a great pleaſure to the loving ſoule.

Now then, the ſenſe of this ſentence appeareth. Becauſe it is rightly ſaid of the loving ſoule, how the more fervently ſhe loveth, and the more earneſtly ſhee longeth after eternall things, the more truely ſhee feeleth the power thereof working within her.

They are not cold words, but to the unkinde ſoule; neither deafe organs,

gans, but to the hardned heart.

The loving and zealous foule knoweth this well; and is so often inflamed in heart, as she is pricked with the desire of eternall peace.

And therefore shee speaketh to thee her Lord God, not to men, of whom she would not be knowne.

And although sometime shee talketh with men: yet that which they heare is to the outward sense. But whatsoever she saith to thee, it is to the very soule, and rather by sighing of the heart, then by sounding words.

Lo (saith she) in peace is my most bitter bitternesse. As if she said; After that of thy goodnesse I returned unto the peace of minde, the transitory state of the world began to be still more grievous unto me. For I see in this peace, how far I am separated from the soveraigne peace.

And indeed, being first busied with earthly desires, & moved with divers passions, I was greatly hindered from spirituall cogitations, and so from heavenly contemplation, after which I should have much longed: but that could I least of all do, because through slothfulnesse I

did.

did forgo all sense of inward sorrow. But now seeing the troubles of idle thoughts are taken away, I do somewhat rest in the peace of conscience, and am drawn unto heavenly matters with mine whole heart, and I do more lament, that I do not enjoy the good things of God, then erst I did mourne being vexed with the troubles of this world.

So that it is bitternesse to my soul even to live in this world, and to go under the heavie burden of sin. But it is bittrest of all, when so much as I may, all mine affections being gathered together, I do enjoy now the good things of the heart, and bend my selfe even with hearty zeale toward the armes of eternall peace, and yet may not obtaine thereunto, because of the bonds of my mortall state.

And this makes mee even with griefe of heart to cry unto thee, and to say; *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver mee from the body of this death* [d]*?*

[d] Rom. 7. 24.

There is none so grievous a burden unto mee, as still to wander from thee by living in the world; for labouring in love, I wish

wish for no comfort beside thee.

For by good experience I have long since learned that my soul can neither bee satisfied with the good things of this world [e], nor yet bee blessed untill shee bee joyned unto thee in the celestiall habitation.

e Eccles. 1. 8.

For as exceedingly she doth love, burne, and use contemplation while she is in the body: so will her desire be insatiable untill the body be laid off. And therefore her end must be made perfect by attaining the soveraigne felicity, and the light of thy countenance [f].

f Rev. 22. 4.

O King of heaven [g], so amiable in all respects; O my all lovely Beloved, even wholly to bee desired, when wilt thou fill mee with the light of thy countenance [h]? when wilt thou satisfie my longing with the well of life?

g 1 Tim. 6. 16. Revel. 1. 5. Revel. 17. 14.

h Psal. 16. 11.

My soule hath much thirsted after thee [i], and greatly will be troubled untill she attaine thee.

i Psal. 42. 2.

Living in the world, and not seeing thee, I can take no comfort of whatsoever I behold; so greatly doth zeale waxe hot, that not once but often I break into these words: When shall I come, and appear before

of the Imitation of Christ.

fore the face of my God[k]? k Psal.41.3.

And this love of mine ceaseth not, but encreaseth more and more, in such sort, that I am driven even to weep night and day, while continually I doe think with my selfe, *where is now my God?*

For it is a comfort for the loving soule to weep for thy sake, while she must want her desire, and still expect thy comming.

And these tears do more feed and refresh the loving soule, then if she injoyed all the things of this world. For did she love them[l], she would not weep for thee. l Mat.24.6.

Oh how blessed, and pleasing to thee is the shedding of such tears!

For they do both kill the desires of secular and temporall joyes: and also they obtaine the celestiall consolation. And therefore none doe shed such holy tears, but they which are both singularly in love, and very notably religious.

Far of another kinde be the tears of such as miserably be troubled in this world. For one man weepeth because he is sick, another for that he is oppressed, another because he is injured, another because his minde

minde is contraried: but it is the religious soule only, which powres forth teares even of pure love to the Saviour-ward: as for temporall dammage, and worldly causes, let trouble thee not, for thou submittest thy self to the righteous judgment of God [m], and art thankfull.

m Psal.119.137.

And for so doing, let no worldly creature judge thee either foolish or impatient: because thy teares do not grieve, but comfort; they do not blur the face, but wash it; they hurt not the eyes, but they purge the sight of the minde.

Howbeit, let others conceive hereof as they will, I cannot think otherwise then well of you: for I doe wish to drinke deepe of your teares.

5. If you wish to weep with me, then may you bee comforted with mee.

Oh that your soule were as I am, you could never forget what I do feele.

I know whom I credit, and sure I am, it is a more easie thing to doubt that there is any heaven and earth, then that there is a God. And I know also he is my full happi-

and that I shall never be blessed until I have an absolute sight of his majesty. n Rev. 21. 4.

Whose sight, because it is not yet granted me, nor always assured me, doth make me to lament, inasmuch as I am deprived of happiness, wrapped in the darkness of this life, and downe-poised with the weight of mine own infirmity o, that I am not of power to suffer that wonderfull light, & that whatsoever I do think concerning the glory of heaven, is so little, and over-shadowed as it were with a cloud. o Wis. 9. 15.

Hence it is that I double my complaint in stead of a song: and while they still say unto mee, *Where is thy God?* my spirit is the more troubled. p Psal. 41. 10.

For thus I think then, *where is my felicity? where is the full joy of mine heart? where is my true peace and rest?* Where be all the good things that are unspeakable, but onely in my God? And when shall I enjoy them, unlesse I bee joyned unto him, having nothing between?

Yea, when shall I there be? I know not, but I beleeve well; I doe hope well, but yet I have not.

Why then, where is my God who
I love so, and yet I see him no
through whose love I am so o
wounded; through whose absence
am so grieved; through whose gr
cious visitation so refreshed
time?

Where is my God, whom ev
once to see, is to know all things?

Where is my God, in whom
mine heart and my flesh doe so
nestly desire to rejoyce?

Where is my God, for whose
I suffer such paine and sorrow?
very remembrance is sweet, but
presence is more lovely, and exp
leth all sadnesse from mine hear

Where is mine hope, and
crowne? Is it not in thee my G
and in thy blessed countenance?

1 Cor.13.12. Oh shew me once thy glory, a
thy face; so will I cease to co
plain.

If I contend a little with thee, O
blame mee not; extreme zeale o
good will hath many wonderfull
devices.

I am driven to expect, and mo
still to long, and so this joyfull co
bate doth continue.

CHAP. 21.

1. *The delaying of the happy is patiently to be borne.*
2. *The felicity of the life to come.*
3. *With a prayer for the same.*

LOrd, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. a Phil.1.23.

How gladly I would be with thee, thou knowest full well, O my God; and how entirely I desire the same, I am not able sufficiently to expresse.

I wish it not only when I am evill at ease; but also what prosperity soever I enjoy, my desire is to be with thee.

But how shall my longing bee satisfied?

Here it grieveth me to conteinue, b Phil.1.23.
and yet of necessity I must; but my desire is to be with thee, and I may not yet.

And therefore I see no remedy but that I am with patience to endure this delay, and to resigne my

wiſhing to thine holy will.

For what? is it meet I ſhould murmure, when it muſt be ſo? God forbid. Againe, I have the examples of many of Gods children which have uſed long patience in this life [b], and yet their hearts were in heaven [c].

b Heb. 11. 13, 14, &c.
c Col. 3. 1, 2.

Therefore if thy will bee to prolong my pilgrimage, I am willing to abide, and obey your pleaſure.

Howbeit, that with leſſe griefe I may beare my longing to bee with thee, I will, till that time, ſtill meditate with my ſelfe of that celeſtiall habitation.

Yet I preſume not to pierce into the leaſt of thoſe joyes which thou haſt prepared for ſuch as love thee [d]: but of this and that will I meditate, to the end that my affection being preſſed downe and infected oftentimes, it may be ſtirred up, and lifted into the hope of eternall bliſſe.

d 1 Cor. 2. 9.

O that that day had once ſhined, whither then had the joies of heaven raviſhed mee! How merry at the heart ſhould I bee then, and how happy ſhould I think my ſelfe!

How happy ſhould I then bee enjoying a continuall peace [e]!

e Rev. 21. 4.

From

From thenceforth should I make none inquirie for any thing, seeing no secret could be hid. But my life is spent in darknesse, and therefore no marvell though my sight doe dazle between the clouds of glory.

Notwithstanding, I will lift up mine eyes, and though a far off, behold and salute that holy City Jerusalem, builded in the heaven, even of lively stones [f], namely, of holy angels and men, replenished continually with praise, and myrth, and magnifying the Lord their God for ever and ever. [f] Rev.21.10,11, &c.

Now therefore my soul, take unto thee the wings of desire, and flie upward, flie, I say, from all bodily senses: ascend from the visible forme of this world, unto the holy house of God, even unto the new Jerusalem, builded substantially in aye lasting peace, crowned with glory and honour, and blessed with the abundance of all good things.

Lo, wonderfull and unspeakable are the things of heaven, which no man either can or may utter [g]. [g] 2 Cor.12.4.

No sense is able to conceive, neither can the understanding of man attaine to know, how God is in his

Saints glorious, and wonderfull in majestie.

Mount thou in cogitation even unto the highest things, stretch thy desire into the everlasting eternity, and say with the Prophet [h]: *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O citie of God.*

h Psal.87.3.

There whatsoever can bee wished of man, is had [i]: and what is once got, is kept without care [k].

i Rev.21.4.
k Rev.7.17.

God there is beheld face to face cleerly [l], truly, continually, and eternally.

l 1 Cor.13.12.

There the blessed and all-glorious Trinitie, in one unseparable unity, which of all the blessed Citizens of heaven is worshipped, praised and magnified [m], is perfectly knowne.

m Rev.7.12.

There is mine only and right singularly beloved friend [n], which is more precious (to mee) then all riches [o]; and the treasure above all to bee desired, even my Lord Jesus Christ [p], the immortall spouse of the Church [q], in whom are hid [r] (but yet revealed to the Saints) from the beginning of the world, the whole treasures of wisedome and knowledge [s].

n Can.1.1,2,&c.
o Mat.10.37,38. Mat.6.19,20,21.
p Ro.10.3,7,&c.
q Eph.5. 25,26, &c. Rev. 21.9.
r Mat.11.25.
s Col.2.3.

Oh how jocond are the Saints now

now before the face of the moſt Holy, who is the cauſe and ſpring of their bleſſednesse!

For there he ſpeaketh unto them not in parables, but plainly of the Father [t].

t Ioh.16.25.

He is their Book, even the word which in the beginning was with God [u], teaching all things, and performing all things, ſo that they want nothing in glory.

u Ioh.1.1.

O bleſſed and everlaſting glory, not of ſmall remembrance, but all happy in God his preſence!

There is alſo the moſt glorious mother of our Saviour, and conſtant virgin Mary, beautifying the whole celeſtiall Court with her comelineſſe and beautie, compaſſed and accompanied with troops of virgins, as with ſweet Roſes and Lilies of the vallies.

There bee the Angels and Archangels placed in order, who moſt cheerfully ſound forth the praiſes of God.

There be the Patriarks and Prophets, even they which being filled long agoe with the holy Ghoſt, did foretell of Chriſt his comming [x], whom now they both know, and ever-

x Gen.49.10. Num.24.17. Dan.9.24,25. Iſa.7.14. Ier.31.22. Pſal.13.2,11. Hag.1.8.10.

vermore confesse to bee their Lord and Saviour, the King of kings[y], and perfect God. There they behold eye to eye, their Redeemer, whom long they looked for, and for whose comming they longed.

[y] Rev.7.14. Rev.19.16.

There be the Lords Apostles and Disciples, those most reverend and renowned Fathers, which were filled with holinesse and grace, and laid a strong foundation of the Catholike faith.

There especially shineth that reverend man John, which baptized our Saviour Christ[z], and was a speciall friend[a] of my Spouse.

[z] Mat.3.13,14, &c. Mar.1.9,10. Luk.3.21. [a] Ioh.20.2. Ioh.21.7,20.

There is Peter, and Paul, and Andrew, and Philip, and Thomas, and James, and John, and all the other Apostles and Evangelists, pillars of the Church.

To keep the faith, and to follow the example of these men, is the ready way to everlasting life.

Moreover, there bee the valiant Martyrs enriched with their proper blood, and everlastingly blessed with Christ, whose bodies, though they were most cruelly fleane: yet could not their soules by any torments be severed from Christ.

Also

Also, there be the noble Confessors, which contemned this present life, that they might be in heaven.

There be the great and glorious Doctors, that were so carried aloft in contemplation, of which many have left a lively image of holinesse in their writing.

There bee young men and maidens, old men and children praising the Name of the Lord continually, and ascribing the goodnesse which they had at any time unto his mercie.

There they are, I say, alway gratefull, alway zealous, alway jocond, alway religious, never loathing, but ever loving the Lord. Oh, how glorious is this Kingdome, where all the Saints do reigne with Christ, arrayed with the fairest robe [b], and be without care of the other!

There they follow the Lambe whersoever hee goeth [c], for they cannot part; but rejoycing everlastingly, shall rejoyce in the Lord.

O my soule, muse thou upon these things, and cast thy thoughts upon heavenly matters.

That place indeed is an holy place, and God is in the same.

b Rev. 16. 11. Rev. 7. 13.

c Rev. 14. 4.

There

d Rev. 21. 4. There is surpassing joy and peace, good things abound, and evils there be none.

Oh, if thou couldest even a little comprehend the unspeakable joyes of God his Saints, then should you finde some comfort. For in me you shall bee sure to finde nothing but labour, and sorrow, and tentations, and troubles of this world.

e Rom. 1. 17. Oh that the giver of superall light e would vouchsafe to inspire some portion of these joyes into you, and not send you back unto my new withering food, but according to the riches of his superabundant mercy, purifie and rid you of all materiall forms, and bring you, yea by force, into the depth of his eternall brightnesse.

Would to God you could carry back from that heavenly sanctuary, a forme and example of true holinesse which you might imitate.

For better and more true are the examples of celestiall, and strong things, then they which are confirmed by earthly demonstrations.

Therefore grant Lord, that I may savour and know what the perfect felicitie of Saints is, not so much

much by written books thereof, as by the holy Ghost, which teacheth of celestiall secrets in such sort, as no sense of man is able to reach thereunto.

Grant also, that from henceforth I may lift up my minde more fervently unto heavenly things; and amids my grievous troubles, valiantly bear the garland of patience, till the debt of flesh being paid, I may attaine through thy mercy unto this felicitie that I so desire.

CHAP.

CHAP. 22.

1. *A godly meditation, concerning the accesse unto the Holy of holies, even Jesus Christ, the King of Angels.*
2. *Godly petitions for the forgivenesse of sinnes.*

THou art my King, O God [a].

Arise now my soul, come, and enter into the wonderfull Tabernacle, even into the house of God.

For it is meet that omitting other things, thou with all reverence doe proceed to salute our Lord Jesus Christ [b], thy Saviour [c] & Redeemer [d], which is the head of all principality and power [e]; the joy and crowne of all Saints, the assured trust and certaine hope of all the faithfull [f].

Hee it is which hath made [g], and redeemed thee [h]; he it is which hath, for thy sake, both laboured [i], striven [k], and overcome [l].

He is thine Advocate [m], and the propitiation for thy sins.

He is thy comforter, thy provider, and thy Lord [n].

Hee

a Psal. 44. 4.
b Rom. 1. 3, 7, &c.
c Mat. 1. 21.
d Gal. 3. 13.
e Rev. 17. 14.
f Col. 1. 27.
g Psal. 100. 3. Psal. 119. 73.
h 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.
i Isa. 53. 3, 4, &c.
k 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, &c.
l Mat. 4. 10, 11. Ioh. 16. 33.
m 1 Ioh. 2. 1.
n Rev. 19. 16.

Hee is thine onely and singular friend that feedeth among the lilies [o], and loveth to rest him upon thy breasts [p].

o Cant. 2. 16.
p Cant. 1. 12.

Who ever hath done the like for thee? who ever loved you so entirely?

Come thou unto him, offer your selfe to him, open your whole heart, and unfold even your hidden secrets unto him.

For no man will better either declare, or else reveal how you should behave your self in this world, in the which, things fall out so strangely.

Let your wishes and prayers bee directed unto him; and in him let all your counsels abide.

Vaine is the hope of man [q]; but he is the upholder of peace.

q Psal. 32. 9.

Through him wee have open accesse unto the Father [r], and from him we receive all goodnesse and vertue [s].

r Eph. 3. 18.
s 1 Cor. 1. 30, 31.

Whether you mourne, or whether you rejoyce, make continuall recourse unto him.

Hee is the glasse of life, the rule of righteousnesse, the light of the soul, the love of shamefastnesse, and the joy of a good conscience.

If

If thou loveſt him, it will bee no hard matter for thee to deſpiſe the vain pleaſures of this world: if thou loveſt him, all ſowre things will ſeem ſweet; all heavie things will ſeem light; and that which otherwiſe you ſhould miſlike, you will like right well for his ſake [t].

[t] Rom.8.35.

To be briefe, of him, and through him, and for him are all things [u].

[u] Rom.11.36.

The principall end both of all our thoughts, and of all our actions, and of our ſpeech, and of our reading, praying, meditating, and ſpeculation ſhould be Jeſus Chriſt.

Through him you attaine ſalvation [x], and everlaſting life.

[x] Gal.3.13.

For his love you will neither feare to die [y], nor refuſe to live [z]: becauſe you are to commit your ſelfe wholly to his truſt, and to prefer nothing before his love and honour.

[y] Rom.8.35.36. [z] Phil.1.23.

Wherefore come neer, and give thanks to thy Redeemer.

℣. O moſt ſweet Jeſu, above all things to bee loved, I ſalute thee moſt religiouſly, I commend thee moſt highly, and I bleſſe thee now and everlaſtingly with all thy creatures.

O moſt renowned Jeſu, how can I

I praise thee as I ought! When shall I thank thee, as I am bound, in that thy mercies are so infinite to me-ward?

Again, whatsoever I give, it is thy gift, and I received it from thee a. But little or nothing it is that I have: and can I then sacrifice of nothing? a. 1 Cor. 4. 7.

Howbeit, accept I beseech thee, mine humble, base and vile sacrifice, and let my gifts be ascribed to thy goodnesse.

Let the quires of heavenly Angels attending about thee, sound forth thine infinite praises on my behalf: also let the soules of the righteous repeate the same.

In the meane while, what shall I doe in memory, and praise of thy most sacred name?

Much I ought to do, and for many things I am greatly bound; yet am I not able to performe the least.

And therefore I will read of thee, O my sweet Saviour, I will write of thee, I will sing of thee, I will think of thee, I will speak of thee, I will work for thee, and for thee will I suffer.

In thee will I rejoyce, thee will I praise,

praise, thee will I magnifie, thee will I glorifie.

As it is meet I will worship thee, b Mat. 4. 10. because thou art my God[b], in whom I beleeve, whom I do love, seek, and have alway desired.

Give mee some good signe, that mine eyes may behold thy goodly countenance in the heavens.

Humbly I do throw down my self at thy feet in heart, earnestly with teares desiring thy favour, that thou wilt vouchsafe to be good unto me.

Write my name in thy Booke of life; and let that never be out blotted, which thine holy hand hath written.

I, wretch that I am, and far inferior to any of thy saints, yet trusting boldly upon the more then excellent prerogative of thy mercy, beseech thee, that at the leastwise I may bee counted among the basest and worst of thine elect.

I confesse, my life and conversation is not such, that I dare presume any thing of my self; and therefore all mine hope and comfort is, and resteth in the price of thy precious bloud, wherein I doe wholly repose my self, and deem it requisite that I

should

should do so, together with all which I have done, offended, deserved and omitted. And therefore behold, most gracious Jesu, my baseness and humility, consider the affection of mine heart which I beare toward thee, not for thy merit, but for thy mercy sake, which vouchsafest to be loved even of the unworthy.

In respect of mine unworthinesse I am greatly ashamed to come in thy presence; but I am drawn on & emboldened through your wonderfull goodnesse and humility[b], which hast in perfect good will [c] yeelded not only to become man [d], but also to suffer[e], die, and to be buried for my sake: and therefore unto thee doe I make recourse, for I finde no goodnesse in my selfe.

b Mat.17.28,29.
c Rom.5.7.
d Ioh.1.14.
e Isa.53.3,4,&c.

Supply that for my sake, which of my selfe I cannot performe.

Thou hast given mee a desire [f] to pray unto thee, to praise, and to bless thee: because thou art mine hope and my portion in the land of the living [g]. All my desire is to be with thee in the kingdome of heaven; but inasmuch as my time is not yet come, I will waite untill the night.

f Phil.1.23.
g Psal.142.5.

night approach. In the mean while this may be my comfort in the place of my pilgrimage, that I am mindfull of thy name, and of thine exceeding great love, and that I behold thee in this life by the eyes of my faith.

To live in this world, and yet to repose no truſt in thee, O Lord, were a thing intolerable to my ſoul. I do not conſent to rejoyce with the
h Luk.6.25. world [h]; and that I may not abide without joy and comfort, I have de-
i 1 Cor.1.31. termined to place my joy in thee [i].

Much, and often ſhould I goe aſtray, greatly ſhould I be toſſed in cogitations, did I not retaine thee faſt in my minde and thoughts.

And foraſmuch as I am unable to ſound the depth of thy divinitie, I think it beſt for mee to turne unto the deeds and ſayings of thine humanity; becauſe, being in theſe cogitations, I ſwerve not altogether from thy divinity.

Thanks bee to thee, good Jeſu, ſweet and lovely Jeſu, for vouchſafing to become my brother, to take
k Joh.1.14. Mat.1.23. my fleſh and bones upon thee [k].

Thanks I ſay to thee for entering into the wombe of good Mary thy mother,

mother, of whose maidenly flesh thou tookst the holy members of thy body, which thou didst unite to thy divine nature.

CHAP. 23.

A prayer and commendation of our Saviour Christ.

NOtwithstanding I am wicked, & guiltie of manifold sins, yet have I great hope of salvation, because of thy suffering, and merits: whereof as I have a good minde to consider, so grant, O my Lord Christ, that I may with good leave so doe.

For who am I to approach nigh unto thee, unlesse I have licence?

I know mine unworthinesse to appeare in his presence, whom the very Angels do worship with great reverence, saying:

Who is this that commeth out of the wilderneſſe of this world, so abounding in pleasure?

Therefore, O most blessed Saviour, I am far unmeet to think of thy glory

glory and honour, of thy beauty and magnificence; becauſe I am earth & ashes [a], yea, more base am I then earth and ashes, becauſe I am ſinfull and prone unto all wickedneſſe.

a Eccles. 10. 9.

But thou being made higher then heaven, haſt the whole world under thy feete [b]; and art worthy to be praiſed and honoured for evermore.

b Mat. 28. 18. Heb. 2. 8.

Howbeit, of thine unſpeakable goodneſſe, which paſſeth all underſtanding, I am drawne in affection unto thee, becauſe thou art the comfort of the comfortleſſe, and uſeſt moſt willingly to help moſt miſerable ſinners.

I acknowledge how I am not only deſtitute of all comfort, eſpecially of thy favour; but alſo very unable to doe good unto my ſelfe.

But mercifull Jeſus, wouldſt thou vouchſafe to conſider my baſneſſe, then ſhould I both bee aided and comforted moſt plentifully in this my trouble.

Therefore I ſee well, whenſoever I am compaſſed about with affliction and tentation, I am ſtraight way and without fear to flye unto thee: for where mercy is moſt ready,

there

there grace is in greatest plenty.

And when I have a good minde to consider of thy most glorious estate, and to commend thee in most honourable manner, I must come forth with a much purer affection, and may not goe forward without the conduction of Gods heavenly light.

Assuredly he shall have no glory, but shame, that presumeth without all reverence to approach unto thy gate.

And he which commeth thereinto, must proceed with all reverence and humility, joyned with good hope, that hee may finde grace to be admitted.

Wherefore both humbly, and reverently, and devoutly, and boldly I goe to thee-ward.

Let the godly lover of thy name listen then what I say.

The heaven rejoyceth, the earth wondereth, when by faith mine heart saith, Christ is my Saviour.

Satan flyeth, hell trembleth, when my conscience cryeth, Christ is my Saviour.

The world waxeth vile, and the flesh humble, when as a Christian doth

doth say, Christ is my Saviour.

Sorrow departeth, new comfort approacheth, when my minde pronounceth, Christ is my Saviour.

Slothfulnesse vanisheth, my heart through love fainteth, when zealously I can say, Christ is my Saviour.

Zeal encreaseth, compunction riseth, hope groweth, comfort waxeth strong, when my soule soundeth Christ is my Saviour.

Mine heart is jocond, mine affection becommeth sound, when in truth I do say, Christ is my Saviour.

For such is the force of those words uttered of a faithfull soule that no man is able to expresse the same in words, but still it reacheth more high and excellent then may be reached unto by the wit of man.

Which maketh mee once againe most humbly to bow my knees, and to thee, O blessed Saviour, and still I say, O Christ my Saviour.

O most gracious Jesu, receive my prayer, and mee with it, that I may finde somewhat that may like thee well, and embolden mee, and kindle my zeale, and keep me evermore in continuall praising of thine holy Name.

Oh

Oh that for the satisfying my desire to praise and to pray unto thee from the very bottome of my heart, both all my members were forthwith converted into tongues, and those tongues into fiery voices, that I might find a way to glorifie thee, my Saviour, world without end!

O that for all my sins wherewith I have deserved thine indignation, offended grievously thy Father, and dishonoured thee, with all the hoste of heaven, I might once so throughly bewaile, and repent, that I might hereafter take a new trade of life, to thy glory, and the comfort of my soule.

Oh that thou wouldst assist mee in well doing, seeing my life fraile, and I all subject to offending!

O pardon and forgive all my sins, either wilfully or negligently committed, all my vaine thoughts, my ungodly speeches, my abominable deeds!

O most gracious Jesu, I say, doe thou both defend me from doing any wickednesse hereafter, and forgive, I pray thee, all my sinnes forepast: so shall I be both more devout, the more zealous, and the more

carefull in saying, thou Christ my Saviour, both in mine heart, with my mouth, in company, and my chamber, and in the garden, in the field, and in all places whersoever I shall be.

And now, what more shall I aske of thee, O Christ my Saviour? What is better, or more profitable, or more necessary, especially for me a great sinner, then to find favour in thy sight, O Christ my Saviour? And therefore it is that I have desired, and still do crave, even that by thine intercession & means I may have the grace of God the Father, who, as both thy selfe hast said, and the Apostle doth witnesse, hast all power given thee both in heaven and earth c.

c Mat. 28. 8.

There is no prayer more welcome to thee then this is, nor any thing more necessary for me, then the grace and favour of God.

If I have the grace of God, whatsoever else I doe want, I am rich enough.

For what is all my endeavouring if I lack that? Againe, what can not doe, if I be assisted and holpen thereby?

of the Imitation of Christ.

I see that many and divers are my wicked affections; but yet against all passions, the grace of God is a most effectuall medicine, and if once it come, it will mitigate them all.

I do also stand in need of spirituall wisdome and knowledge: but the grace of God is a most excellent teacher and instructer of heavenly knowledge, and is able, even suddenly to instruct me in whatsoever things are necessary unto salvation.

For to require more then is necessary, or to desire to understand more then is lawfull to bee knowne, is against the will of God, whose pleasure is that we should be humbled under his hand, and contented with his grace.

Wherefore obtaine this grace for me, O Christ, which is so noble and precious, that indeed I ought neither to desire or crave any other thing then grace for grace.

CHAP. 24.

A prayer unto Jesus Christ, for comfort.

a Psal.45.2.

GRace is poured into thy lips a.

O my Lord, I beseech thee, at the length now vouchsafe to speake unto me, O Christ. Open thy mouth within, owne name, who art full of all spirituall graces.

b Ioh.1.16.

For I am the fountain of mercy, full of love and sweetnesse. I am the ladder for sinners, the hope and pardon of the guilty, I am the comfort of the sorrowfull, & the speciall joy of all Saints. Come unto mee, so many as labour; & fill your selves at the breasts of my comfort, because I am good and mercifull to all which cry unto mee.

Come unto mee both righteous and sinners, I will sue unto the Father for you; I will intreat him to bee good unto you, and to fill you with the holy Ghost.

I call every one, I look for all, I desire

desire to have all to come unto me, I despise no sinner, but with the angels in heaven I rejoyce exceedingly over that sinner which repenteth [c], and so commeth into the favour of God: for no one drop of my bloud which I shed for the world is in vaine.

Therefore, come unto me, yee sonnes of men, consider and behold my zeale for you unto God my Father.

Lo, I have taken his wrath upon my selfe, I have borne his displeasure [d], yea, and continually doe I make supplication unto him for you [e], whom, you know right well, you have grievously offended.

Turn then, and approach, repent, and of my word you shall have pardon.

For, lo, I stand between heaven and earth, betweene God and sinners; and that this world perish not, I obtaine through my prayers.

Wherefore abuse not my goodnesse and mercy; but beware of offending, lest when you little think thereof [f], indignation bee poured upon you, and intolerable vengeance [g].

c Luk. 15. 10.
d Isa. 53. 12, &c.
e 1 Ioh. 1. 2.
f Mat. 24. 44.
g Rom. 2.

The fourth booke

I doe forewarne you as children, I beseech you as friends, bee you perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect [h].

h Mat. 5. 48.

Forget not mee, who have been, and am, and will bee mindefull of you.

For I do both pitie such as are in misery, and I doe entreat for those which cry unto me [i].

i Ioh. 2. 1, 2.

S. O gracious speech, and full of all comfort!

O heavenly voyce, sweetly dropping from heaven, to the comforting of sinners, and rejoycing of the righteous!

O celestiall musick, how sweetly doest thou resound in a desperate conscience!

Whence is it that the Saviour of mankinde will thus talke with me?

Blessed art thou, O Christ, and blessed are the words of thy mouth. For hony is under thy tongue, and the savour of thy speech excelleth all sweetnesse. My soule was mollified, so soone as thou spakest, O Christ.

Behold, no sooner did thy voyce sound in mine eares, but my soule within did spring for joy. For my spirit

spirit revived within mee, and all mine entrails were filled with new comfort; because good and joyfull things are told me this day by you.

I was dolefull, but now I am jocond because of your words. For your voyce is sweet in mine eares.

I was grieved and desolate; but now I am revived, and made merry. For thou hast sent thine hand from on high, and touched me, whereby of weak, I am become strong.

Scarce could I speak: but now I have a good minde to sing, and to praise thee highly.

I was loth to live, and now I am willing to die, because I have thee, Christ, for mine Advocate, with the Father, to whose mercy I commend my self, even from this time for ever and ever. For since first you began to speak unto the heart of the desolate orphan, I have been changed into a better state, and greatly comforted in my minde.

I was almost at the door of desperation, but thy comfort came, and lifted me up with these words:

I. What is the matter, Son? and who are they which would hurt thee? Fear not, I will see unto thee,

my son. I doe live with God my Father k, and I sit at his right hand, being a faithfull high Priest, and an Intercessor for thy sins l.

k Rev.1.4.

l 1 Iob.2.1,2.

In mee thou shouldst repose thy trust, because I doe both give life m, and destroy death n.

m Iob.11.25.

n 2 Cor.15.55.

I was incarnate of a Virgin in time o, but of my Father, begotten before all times p, and when the fulnesse of time came, I suffered for mans salvation q.

o Mat.1.18,19, &c.

p Psal.2.7. Heb.1.5.

q Gal.4.4,5.

Lo, I am the hope and comfort of the godly, and by me is faith and victory attained r.

r 1 Cor.15.57.

And therefore let neither me, nor these things be out of thy mind, and thou shalt not fear any darts of Sathan.

S. O happy houre! O blessed state, that my Lord and Saviour will vouchsafe to comfort on this wise my troubled heart!

Oh that I might still heare thy so comfortable words! for greatly doe they inflame and move mee, and touch mee even at the very heart.

O blessed Christ, thou never ceasest to send forth the sweet milke of heavenly consolation! For by reason

sin of the abundance of thy grace, thou canst not deny favour to such as crave the same at thine hands, yet often thou shewest much mercie even to the very sinner [f]. O Christ, thou excellest in pitifulnesse, in mercy, and in loving. O Saviour, to whom none is to bee compared, thou art above all to be loved, and to be worshipped.

O Son of God, by whom we are all the sons of God [t], and of whom we are called Christians [u], thou art of all good men to bee served most religiously, and above all [x].

O friend of all friends [y], King of heaven and earth [z], Lord of Angels [a], conqueror of devils [b], draw me after thee, left I fall, and so rest under the heavie burden of sin.

Poure out thy grace, send me thy comfortable dew from above, that truly I may perceive, how thou art the procurer, and the open fountain of all mercy [c].

L. I am indeed the spring of holy love, and of chaste and religious feare, of godly conference, and of sweet consolation.

Therefore, when you doe heare my name, rejoyce with your whole

f Mat. 5. 45.

t Gal. 4. 6, 7.

u Act. 11. 26.

x Mat. 4. 10.

y 1 Ioh. 3. 16.

z Rev. 2. 5, 6.

a Heb. 1. 6, 7, &c Mar. 1. 13.

b Mat. 4. 1. 11. Mar. 3. 7, 8, 9, &c

c 1 Pet. 3. 24, 25

hearts, and magnifie the goodnesse of your God. In honouring me, you honour the Father, which is God as I am [d]. For I am Jesus, the Son of God [e]: and this name shall I have while the world endureth [f].

But what is Jesus? even the Son of the living God [g], the Saviour of the world [h], the King of heaven and earth [i], the Lord of Angels [k], the Redeemer of the faithfull [l], and the Judge of quick and dead [m].

And what is Jesus? The hope of the godly, the comfort of the desolate, the peace of the meek, the riches of the poore, the glory of the humble, the strength of the weak, the way of such as wander, the light of such as see not, the staffe of such as walk not, the oyle of such as feel not, the stay of the oppressed, the help of the troubled, and the singular refuge of all good men [n].

Blesse the Son with the Father, and so God will blesse you.

Give honour also and glory to the Father, whensoever you praise me.

His glory is my joy, and my praise is his worship.

Place me and the Father as a seal upon

d Ioh.8.1,2,&c.
e Mat.1.18,20.
f 1 Cor.15.28.
g Mat.16.16.
h Mat.1.21. 1 Pet.1.18,19.
i Rev.17.14. Rev.19.16.
k Dan.7.10. Heb.1.6,7, &c.
l Gal.3.13.
m Act.10.42.
n Mat.11.28.

upon thine heart, and as a token upon thine arme.

Therefore sit you, or stand you, or pray, or reade, or write, or worke you, let my name Jesus and God be often reverendly in your mouth, but continually in your heart.

3. O grant it may be so, good Jesus, and let all people, tribes and tongues serve thee, and let all creatures bow at thy presence.

Let heaven say, Reigne thou Jesus: let the earth make answer, Yea, for ever and ever let him reigne.

Yea, let all Saints confesse thy glorious Name, and all good people rejoyce before the Father, and thee his Lambe °, and our Lord Jesus Christ ?, Amen.

° Ioh. 1. 29.
? Rom. 3. 7.

CHAP. 25.

That for God his benefits we are to thanke him.

BLessed bee the glorious Name of the Lord for evermore a.

O Lord my God, let all my doings, all my reading, all my writing, my thoughts, words and understanding tend unto the advancement of thine honour c.

Yea, let mee both begin my businesse in thy Name, and goe forward in thy feare, and finish it with thy blessing.

That which thou hast given, that receive again; and from whence the streams doe flow, thither let them returne.

It never goeth better with me, neither doth it relish better to my soul, then when unfainedly I doe ascribe all to thee, whatsoever I have either done or thought as I should.

My desire is to render thankes: which I then doe as I ought, when for that I have received, and thou hast given, I ascribe all praise to thee,

a Psal. 72. 19.
b Ioh. 20. 17.
c 1 Cor. 10. 31.

thee, and nothing to my selfe. For what can I, a wicked and unprofitable servant, render unto thee my God? Alas, all that I can do, yea, if I should do all which thou commandest to bee done, it is to none effect [d].

[d] Luk. 17. 10.

So that I am brought unto nothing, and rightly humbled. And indeed it is very well that I am so brought downe [e], that thou alone maist bee justified [f], and have the praise of all, and that vile dust [g] may at no time glory in it selfe.

[e] Ps. 119. 71.
[f] Ps. 51. 4.
[g] Eccles. 10. 9.

Howbeit, I minde not to surcease, but will extoll thee both with heart and mouth. For albeit I discharge not my duty therein as I ought: yet ought I to speak of thy goodnesse, and not to be silent.

O my God, thou art my glory, my praise shall alwaies be of thee [h].

[h] Psal. 17. 6.

He that would but a little consider of thy glory, and know what it is to glory in the Lord [i], how would he despise all outward glory!

[i] Ier. 9. 24.

He that would, even but a little, taste of thy sweetnesse, how quickly would he loathe, as most bitter, the pleasure of this world!

Hee that would receive even but a small i

a small sparkle of love into his breast, how would hee burne in affection! For full gladly would hee contemne all things to have thy friendship: and would count it all sweet and easie to be borne, whatsoever he should do or suffer for thy love sake k.

k Rom. 7.35.

Hee that would consider in his minde thy goodnesse to man-ward, how would he rejoice and run after thee! Hee would seek nothing so charily, he would keep nothing so warily, he would pursue nothing so eagerly, as to serve thee. For in loving, he would feel no burden, because love would beat all burdens.

1 Ioan. 5.3.

So then, they which complaine of the burden, do plainly declare how they have little true love in them.

To serve of love, is of all others the greatest pleasure, and comfort in labour.

True love doth neither respect commodity, nor feare damnage, but in all things seeketh that which may please thee.

Oh Christ, how sweet is thy love, how well doth it sound, how sweetly doth it enter, how strongly doth it binde!

Oh

Oh that it would fast binde mee to thy continuall service! Oh that it would wholly take me, and wholly subdue me, and wholly and altogether make me to be thine!

For then, and not before, am I free, when I am taken of thy love, and utterly deprived from all that mine is.

O my Lord, I am thy servant [m], yea, thy servant am I, because thou hast redeemed me. I am thy servant with a very good will, and am not ashamed to be properly thine.

I wish not to be mine owne man againe: and therefore, Lord, help mee, that I may be freed from that which naturally is mine.

Oh blow, and kindle, and enflame the fire of my zeale, so shall mine heart bowl, and become pure, clear, and pleasant: for thy love expelleth vice, and consumeth sin.

Lay thou fast hold upon the band of love, and I shall stand and continue in thy service.

Full well I wot, no good can my service do you, Lord, but all the benefit redoundeth to my selfe, if I doe that which I know is acceptable in thy sight.

[m] Psal.143.12.

[n] 1 Cor.6.20. 1 Cor.7.23. 1 Pet.1.19.

Would

Would I did, and hid not, that I revealed, and concealed not thy works, Lord.

When shall I be able worthily to consider the manifold benefits conferred upon me of God? Mercifully hast thou dealt with thy servant, O Lord; but alack, I never thanked thee for the same, as thou deservedst.

And therefore am I punished, and pinched at the very heart, even because I am unable to answer thy benefits, so great and so manifold.

Oh that I could even but once worthily, and throughly thank thee for all these things!

But what may proceed from him, in whom nothing is? An empty vessell can minister no drink.

What then shall I do? Something I must give. For it is not lawfull to come before GOD with an empty hand; because the Lord abhorreth the ungratefull man.

o Iak. 17. 27.

Oh that I could finde something in this world to give you, that might be acceptable in your sight!

Oh my Lord, whom in heart I love, what would you that I should give you?

As

As for any good thing of mine, you neede it not. And why then p Psal. 50. 12.
aske you a gift of mine hands? For riches, none is comparable to you, and yet require you somewhat of mee?

L. That which I demand is even your selfe wholly. For so it is expedient if you would purchase my favour.

I will give grace to you, and you shall shew grace to mee; and so love shall bee continued betweene us.

Give me your selfe, and you have given even all.

S. O good Jesus, the fountain of all goodnesse, the fountain of life, the fountain of grace, the fountaine of sweetnesse, the very fountain of aye-lasting wisdome, poure upon mee even at this instant, I beseech thee, the gift of thy celestiall grace, and teach me to be grateful, and to give my selfe before all things wholly unto you; for this is the dearest thing that I can render. This I doe know, and acknowledge. Therefore receive me; lo, I am wholly thine, and all that mine is, is thine.

Onely

Onely one thing there is which I cannot give; and that is my sinne, which is mine indeed properly, and therefore not to bee imputed to thee.

Sin mine is, and all defaults which in me are to be ascribed to me only: but glory, and for all thy benefites thanks be unto thee.

But now, in calling thy benefites into mind, of many, I gather only a few, and those which doe most of all move me, and appear in my mind. For neither will the time suffer to recite, neither can my thought q 1 Cor. 2. 9. comprehend them all q.

Because for number they are infinite, for greatnesse incomprehensible, and inestimable for goodnesse. For, though they cannot bee, because they are freely given r Mat. 10. 8. James 1. 17. therefore only thanks bee required for them, otherwise all shall be taken away, as from that ungratefull one f Mat. 25. 28.

First therefore, & afore all things, I thank thee O Lord my God, Creatour of all things t, for making me t Mat. 4. 10. a Ioh. 1. 1, 2, 3. Col. 1. 15, 16, 17. a man, after thine image and similitude u, and for placing me over the x Gen. 1. 27. Psal. 139. 13. works of thine hands y. y Ps. 8. 6, 7, &c.

of the Imitation of Christ.

This is the great and first benefit bestowed upon me, and that of thy meere goodnesse.

For I made not my selfe, but thine hands did fashion me [x], they brought me into this world through my parents [a], whom thy will was, should serve thee herein.

And lo, I am better then other creatures, exalted above the beasts of the field, and birds of the ayr [b], in that I am fashioned after thine image [c], indued with eternall wisdome, and naturally participate of the light uncreate, and of the unchangeable truth. Wherfore, for my being, living, and understanding, I give thee everlasting praise, wishing and desiring herewithall, that all creatures both in heaven and earth, may everlastingly cõmend thy glorious and most excellent Name.

I blesse thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth [d], who of nothing through thy onely begotten Sonne, Jesus Christ, in the holy Ghost, hast created all things [e].

Yea, all things thou hast made, not of necessity compelled, but of pure & speciall love moved thereunto, thereby to shew thy power unto

x Psal. 100.3.

a Psal.139.13. & 15.16.

b Gen.1.28. Wisd.9.2.

c 1 Cor.11.7.

d Psal.97.1. Psal.99.1.

e Ioh.1.1,2,3. Heb.1.2.

f Psal.145.4. unto the sons of men [f]; and by this invisible and coeternall wisedom with thee, thou hast most perfectly

g Wisd.9.1. disposed this visible world [g]. Let all thy creatures, subject in all things

h Mat.28.18. to thee [h], and ordained for the use

i Gen.1.28. of man [i], blesse thee.

For at thy commandement both raine falleth from heaven, and fruit springeth from the earth.

The Sun shineth brightly in the day time, the Starres give light by course in the night.

The fountaines spring, the riven flow, and fishes of divers kindes doe swimme.

The birds not onely flie, but sing also, and the Goates, the Colts, and Harts doe spring upon the mountaines.

The sheep, and other cattell doe joy in good pasture, and divers other living creatures doe run about the groves.

The ground waxeth green, the fields prosper, and trees of the wood doe yeeld both boughes and fruit.

O Lord, which onely dost wonderous things [k], even all these are thy works.

k Psal.72.18.

Another

Another benefit which thou hast
bestowed upon mee, is the mystery
of incarnation [l], the worke of my redemption, the price of our salvation, even the fruit of thy passion and death.

l 1 Tim. 3. 16.

Oh great work of mercy! Oh work of most excellent love [m], most abject humility [n], of most rare patience [o]! No man could merit, nor Angel procure this thing.

m Rom. 5. 8.
n Phil. 2. 5, &c.
o 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22, &c.

The Prophets have wondered at it, the Apostles have seen and taught it, the faithfull have embraced it, and the elect specially doe love, and call it into minde.

The due consideration of this benefit stirreth up good desires, inflameth the heart, nourisheth devotion, inlightneth the minde, purgeth the affection, draweth on to heavenward, withdraweth from the world, driveth unto God, and uniteth the soule with Christ.

This benefit far excelleth the above mentioned: yet there is one which gave each, and hath bestowed both of them upon us, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

For what the better had I been for my life, if I had not been redeemed

with

with the precious bloud of my Sa-
p Gal.1.3.13. our Christ p.

Therefore the grace and mercy
God grew upon me, and plenti-
q Psal.130.7. redemption was made q: for
corrupted nature of man with-
the aid of God his maker, could
ver have been repaired.

O Father of mercies, and God
r 2 Cor.1.3. all comfort r, thou to redeeme
f Ephes.2.3. damned servant f, hast given
t Rom.8.32. only Son to the death t.

O wonderfull kindnesse of
to us-ward, unto which, neither
u 1 Tim.3.16. wit of man, nor the understan-
of Angels can attaine u! But alone
sweet Christ, thou art the be-
ning and the end of our salvat-
and alone couldst help the mis-
ble and damned, thou alone art
vie to the same. For thou
vouchsafe to appear unto the wor-
in the likeneſſe of a moſt vile
x Phil.2.5,6. vant x; and for mortall wormes,
y Eccles.10.9. even of meere pitie, receivedſt wit-
a willing minde, the judgement of
z Gal.1.13. cruell death z.

O good Jesus, thou which art the
fountain of mercy, the light of ev-
lasting glory, the pure glasse (witho-
a Wisd.7.26. spot) of God his majesty a, kin-

of the Invitation of Christ.

[illegible] heart with the meditation of [illegible] unspeakeable benefit bestowed [illegible] me, and upon all mankinde [b]. But this, as was the former, is ge[illegible]all, sufficient to save all, but [illegible] effectuall in all, by reason of [illegible] incredulity and malice of ma[illegible] homboit, it saveth, and is profi[illegible]ble to all the elect, for whose sake [illegible] things were created; and be (as [illegible] may say) created againe, through [illegible] my Saviour.

O good Jesus, how manifold are [illegible] benefits brought unto us by [illegible] humanitie! Thou becamest our brother, and [illegible] of our flesh [c], that wee might [illegible] counted the children of God [d], [illegible] have accesse unto the Father through thee [e], the fire of whose displeasure, none could quench, but thou alone, of whom himselfe did say [f]: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Happy is the soul which earnestly recordeth, and heartily loveth, and worthily extolleth the Sacraments of our redemption; and for them thanketh thee; and finally dependeth upon thy counsell, more then upon her owne sense.

b Rom. 5. 15, 16, &c.

c Iob 1. 14.

d Gal. 4. 2, 7.

e 1 Ioh. 2. 1, 2.

f Mat. 3. 17. Mat. 17. 5.

For

The fourth booke

For none is meet to search out ... wisdome can reach into this my... rie; only it is the strength of bell... and the purenesse of the heart ... tened from above [g], that behold... the same. Oh blessed is hee that ... worthy to receive that by gr... which the wise of the world ... not understand by nature [h].

g Mat. 5. 8.

h Mat. 11. 25.

O sweet Jesu, the Wisdome of the Father, make mee in the light of faith to know this great and wonderfull mystery of thine Incarnation [i], for therein the sweetnesse of our whole salvation lyeth, and thereby the rarest friendship that ever was seene appeareth [k], and through it, the unsearchable fulness of thy wisdome glittereth most gloriously.

i 1 Tim. 3. 16.

k 1 Ioh. 3. 16. Rom. 5. 8. Rom. 8. 32.

Oh let thy servant grow on still in godlinesse, in the study of well doing, and more and more in the immorable secret of thine Incarnation: make mee acquainted with the mystery of thine holy passion, and draw me wholly into the meditation of thy worke.

The declaration of this love, and humility, is a wonderfull deep, and a certaine celestiall sea, which may

not

not be soon over, wherein doe swim to and fro the spirituall fishes, both small and great, which thou hast taken with the net of faith.

Wherefore let this thy so great love and sweetnesse, thy so great humility and kindnesse abide still in thy remembrance; let it alway remaine in every sacrifice of prayer that I am to make, and in all mine holy exercises let there be somewhat, as pleasant frankincense, & delightfull spices, for a sweet smelling favour to bee offered unto God the Father, concerning the mystery of thine Incarnation and Passion.

Let now then such as thou hast redeemed, I say, whom thou hast redeemed out of the hand of the enemy, sing out with mee the song of thine heavenly praise, and of inward joy together with thanksgiving.

l Luk. 1. 74.

Yea, let all the Angels standing about thy Throne, fall upon their faces, and worship the Lamb of God, who hath taken away the sins of the world m, saying n:

m Ioh. 1. 29.

Praise, and glory, and wisedome, and thanks, and honour, and power, and might bee unto our Lord Jesus

n Rev. 7. 12.

Christ

The fourth book

Christ for evermore, Amen.

A third benefit not inferior to the former, is the grace of justification, whereby of thy goodnesse thou hast drawn me unto repentance, and amendment of life, forgiving me sins, and giving mee both hope of pardon, and willingnesse to do well, and to serve thee evermore.

This, after Paul, duly had considered, he adhorteth his Disciples to be both thankfull for so great a benefit, and also mindfull of the heavenly grace, and to study to shew themselves worthy so spirituall a calling. *Brethren*, saith hee *, *you see your calling, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.* These things I consider in my selfe, who notwithstanding I am contemptible, and unmeet for the world; yet by thine holy dealing am I saved from the shipwreck of the sone, to thine holy service. And this I ascribe wholly, not unto my goodnesse of mine, but unto thy providence.

For the which, I extoll thy goodnesse, and blesse thee, even, I say, for

* 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27.

Luc. 1. 74.

Ps. 1. 29.

Rev. 7. 12.

cal-

calling me graciously, for giving me desire to please thee, for pardon-ing all my sins, for putting me un-der thy sweet yoke, softening mine heart with the oyle of thy spirit, whom the world neither knoweth, neither seeth nor savoureth.

O mercifull Jesu, keep me in this monde, I beseech thee, encrease thy gifts of grace within mee more and more, so long as I remaine in this visible light.

I perceive right well this calling of mine is a great benefit, not given to all men, but only to such as God the Father hath ordained thereun-to: because it is not in him that wil-leth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy [p], that eve-ry mouth may be stopped [q], and all the world culpable before God; and that no flesh should rejoyce in thy presence [r], nor ascribe any of their own vertues or good works to themselves.

For if thou shouldest deale with me in justice, alas, I were then dam-ned with the cursed spirits in hell.

But of thy goodness, O Lord, thou hast spared mee, and forgiven my

p Rom. 9. 16.
q Rom. 3. 19.
r 1 Cor. 1. 29.

sins, whereby I am not as the ch
of perdition. And therefore
bound to render great thanks
thee for so excellent a benefit:
would to God, both in my spee
and in my life, all the dayes o
life, I might answer my calling.

But Lord, in stead of all th
receive, I beseech thee, my poor
vice, whereby I desire, and ind
am bound to serve thee.

Grant also, that the debt o
service may proceede from
heart, and finally agree to thy
and honour; and that mine h
bee never turned from thy love.
that both my soule and body ma
like watch and persevere day
might in thine holy service, eve
long as life is within my body,
I have my wits to remember th
let thy praise bee never out o
mouth, nor the remembrance o
manifold benefits slip out of m
heart.

And if thy servant shall yet li
many yeares, either an hundred
how many soever, grant, that
may not prove lukewarme, o
bathed at thy service, but bee ev

zealous, and so willing to serve thee, as I was at the first houre and day when mine heart was admonished and confirmed of thee, even with a pure and whole mind only to follow thee, my Lord.

Neither let any infirmitie or adversity hinder my purpose; but even as now I meane, and purpose in the hearing of thee my God: so, I beseech thee, give grace, that what now I have promised, I may performe.

And although through my infirmity and faults, this my course shall bee broken, as there is no man so righteous upon earth but hee sinneth[f]; yet suffer mee not to despaire, and to faint utterly, but put into my minde forth-with to bow the knees of mine heart, and with such sorrow and tears to offer unto thee my wofull and wounded conscience, to bee healed with the salve of thy mercy, and that my purpose may bee bound more surely then ever it was.

[f] 2 Chron. 36.

Let mee never repent mee of this covenant, but still give thanks that I have found such favor in thine eies,

as to bee accepted into thine h
warfare.

Thou canst, O almighty [1], all mercifull God [2], who hast o thing created mee [3]; and for the fall and infirmity of man; art able, I say, and that thou w beseech thee, forgive the sins I have committed, supply wh have omitted, restore what I h lost, heale what is sick, cleanse is uncleane, lighten what is da asswage that which swelleth, flame what is quenched, repair th is broken, recover that is negle amend what is awry, make pla what is rugged, restrain what is c rious, call home that which w dereth, place what is out of or yea, and alter the whole stat my minde, that nothing be want to my former purpose, and let occasion of evill worke for the b unto mee, I most humbly de thee.

This change is made by th right hand of God; this is God h visitation; this is the manifold conference of the divine good nesse.

1 Ezek. 10. 5.
2 Cor. 6. 18.
2 Wisd. 12. 20.
2 Cor. 13.
3 Gen. 1. 26.
Psal. 100. 3.

In ſtead of all thankes, accept the devout ſervice of thine holy Church whereſoever, with the ſweet praiſes of the whole Court of heaven:

And let all the Saints from the beginning of the world, which through thy grace have been enlightened and called, yea, and all the faithfull and Chriſtian people which either bee in the world, or have been afore us, or ſhall live hereafter, let them, I ſay, together celebrate and praiſe thy all ſweete and glorious Name, which is above all names to be bleſſed.y

y Phil. 2. 9, 10.

Let them repeate againe and againe with great joy, repeate all praiſes duely and deſervedly to bee ſaid of thy Name: and that ſo many times, as there be either in the heaven ſtarres, or in the ſea fiſhes, or in the earth corners, or in the Bible letters.

And all this being done, yet muſt I ſay, they have not praiſed thy Name ſufficiently, the which I deſire to commend, even to the uttermoſt of my ſtrength, and by all means to extoll, untill I attaine un-

to those praises, which now cannot be expressed by the voyce of mortall men.

So that thou seest now, my Soule, the greatnesse and the excellency of God thy Creator and Redeemer, his benefits, the which no creature, nor all creatures may recompence, whom he hath made unto the praise and glory of his eternall and blessed name[z], who needeth no glory, but is alone all-sufficient for himselfe; he that is what he is[a], is his owne glory.

z Isa.43.7.

a Exod.3.14.

The number of his benefits were so great, that I could not place them all before mine eyes; and therefore of a great many I chuse three precious gifts, even as the wisemen did, which were about to offer unto Christ Lord[b], wherein I thought good to comprehend the rest.

b Mat.2.11.

For every benefit of God, if you marke well, is either of nature or of grace, or of superexcellencie: and whatsoever else is, may fully be referred unto one of these three kindes.

In the Creation, you have the benefit of nature; in the Redemption, the

the benefit of superexcellencie; in our Iustification, note the benefit of grace.

For all which, and for every of them, glory bee to thee, O sacred Trinity, one equall Deity, both before all worlds, now and for evermore. Amen. c Rev. 17. 10.

FINIS.

A

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